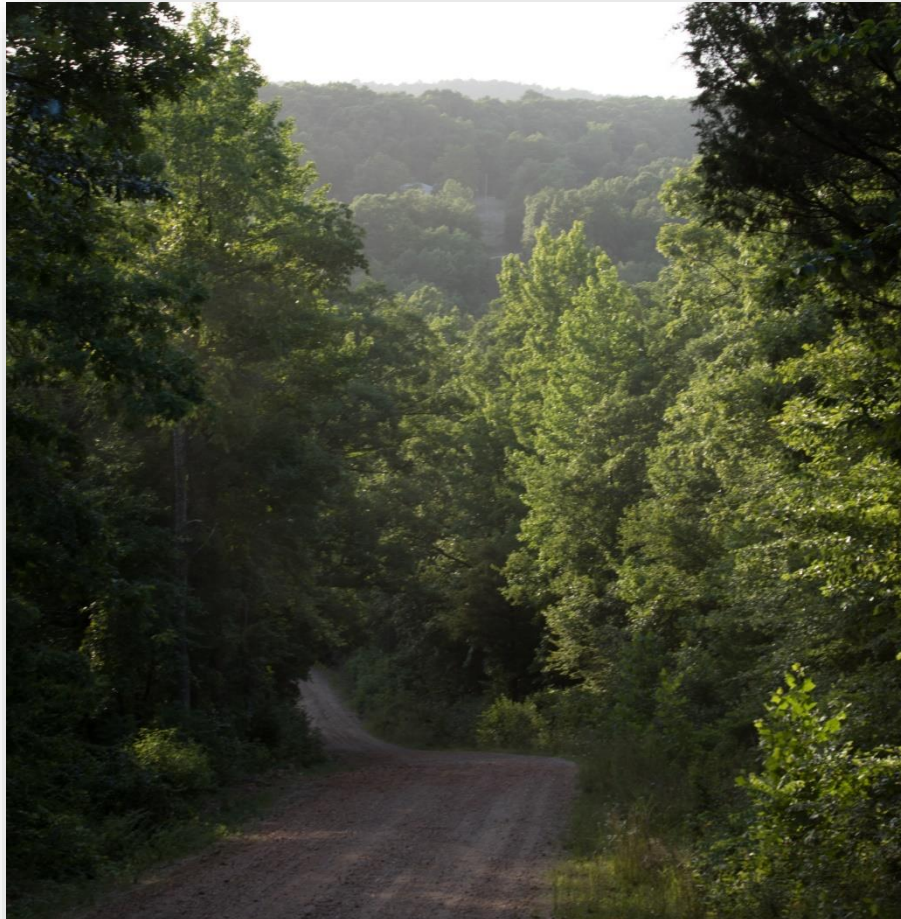


Scenic Analysis Robert's Gap Project



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Scenic Analysis

Purpose

The purpose of this Visual Impact Analysis is to provide an assessment of the Robert's Gap Project's proposed actions and alternatives as the Forest Service strives to protect and maintain the Ozark-St. Francis National Forest, providing both broad scale and detailed assessments critical to the planning process. We will identify the scope and extent of the inventory, identify areas that require a detailed assessment through careful observation of existing landscape character, available views, potential scenery and paths of travel affected by the proposed action.

The primary focus of the analysis is through the lens of the one who has come to the Forest to explore... scenic views, wildlife, riverscapes, cultural enclaves and/or the overall ecosystem. Paths through the Forest have been traveled in order to determine the personality and attractive aspects of the landscape, noting where the natural inclination is to stop and “see” or experience the environment, observing where other explorers have paused. The goal should always be to plan, protect and maintain with the explorer in mind...preserving the aesthetics and experiences that the Natural State is known to embrace.

The Broad Scale Assessment will discuss the nature and extent of the Robert's Gap Project. The Detailed Assessments will consider each visually sensitive area as delineated and presented using maps and photos with subsequent analysis of the quality and condition of the view as well as the proposed action's impact on existing conditions.

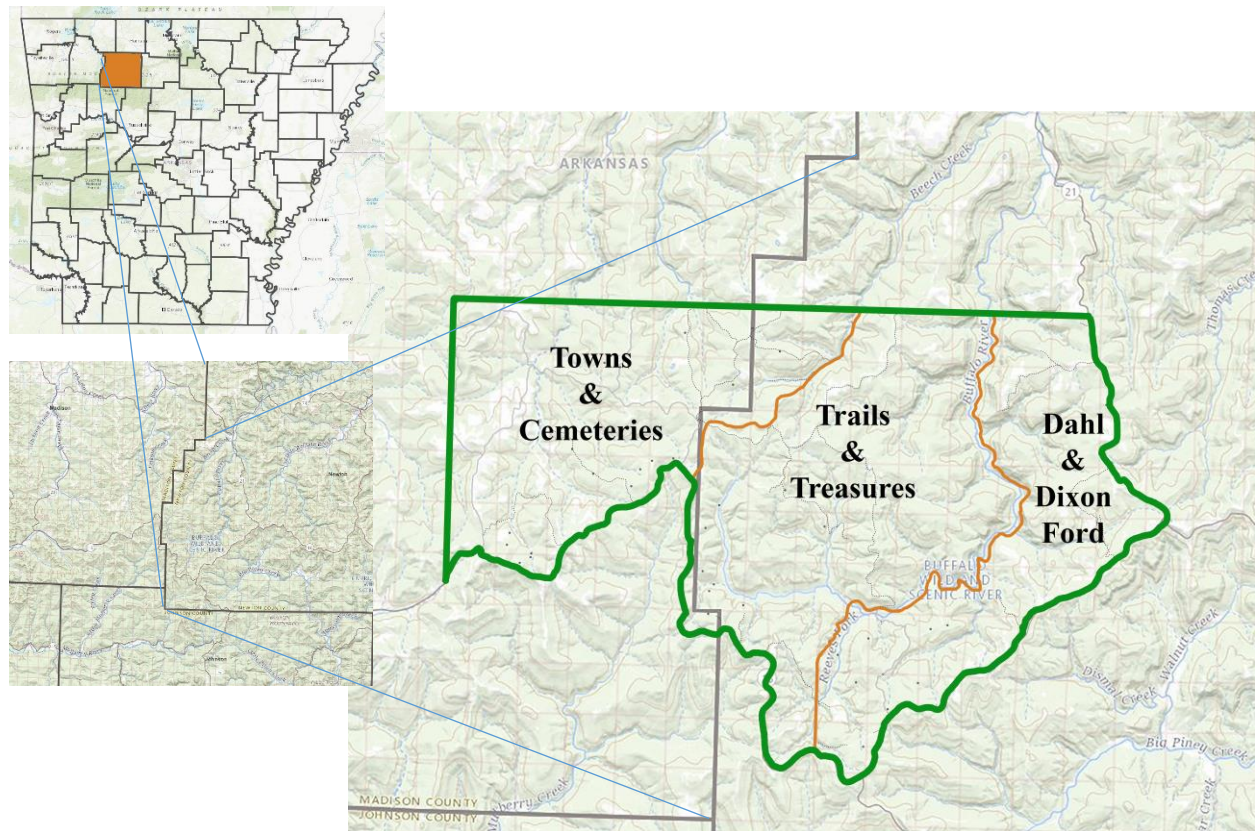


Figure 1 - Project Area Reference Map - Project Boundary and Zones



Figure 2 - Project Area Reference Map - Roads

Project

The proposed Robert's Gap Project is located within the Big Piney Ranger District of the Ozarks – St. Francis Forest. The project area is 17 miles south of Ponca, AR, a popular destination for hikers, mountain bikers, elk, and those preparing to float the Buffalo from this launch area. The project is bounded on the north approximately 10 miles south of the intersection of Hwy 43 and Hwy 21 past the historic Whitely Schoolhouse and toward the Mossville Cemetery. It bounded on the south side by Hwy 16 to where it intersects Hwy 21.



Figure 3 - Elk often visible from Hwy 43



Figure 4 - View of cemetery between Ponca and Mossville, one of many in the vicinity

The primary points of entry are located on Hwy 21 and Hwy16 in Newton County, Arkansas. Primary Point 1 (P1) is the southernmost existing point of access to the Project Area and is marked by the community of Boston with it's charming and photo-ready dilapidated structure being taken over by the forest. The church and cemetery are immediately north of this intersection. P2 is the meeting of Hwy 21 and Hwy 16 at the easternmost edge of the Project. Visitors traveling by way of Scenic Hwy 7 head west on Hwy 16, past the road to Alum Cove Natural Bridge Recreation Area and through the town of Deer, choosing to enter the Project Area through either P1 or P3. The entry with the heaviest traffic is Primary Point 3

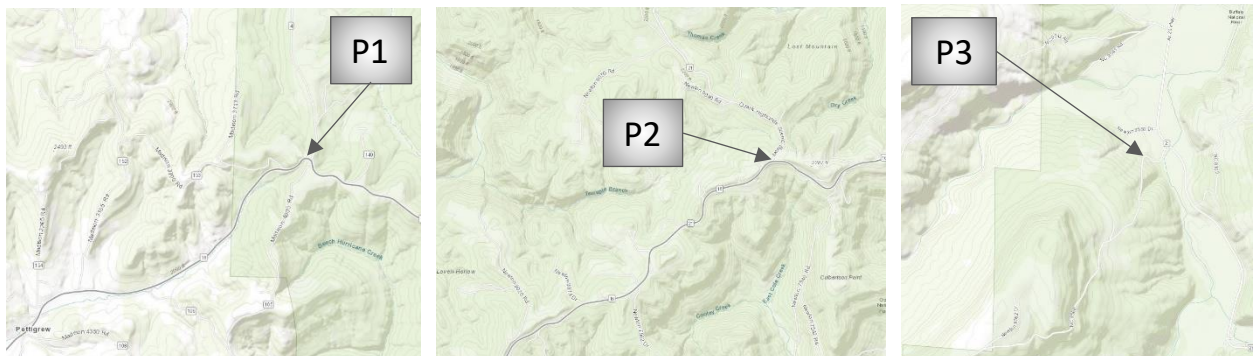


Figure 5 - Primary Points of Entry into the Project Area

located north of the Project on Hwy 21. P3 is 6.1 miles south of Ponca using Hwy 43/Hwy 21 and 1.2 miles north of the Upper Buffalo Wilderness Trailhead and the historic Whiteley Cemetery on Hwy 21. Another potential primary access from FR1463 and Hwy 16 may arise out of the implementation of the Proposed Actions to provide a better distribution of travel.



Figure 6 - View from Upper Buffalo Wilderness Trailhead and Whitely Cemetery north toward Ponca



Figure 7 - Whiteley Schoolhouse, pictured at information kiosk, and cellar reclaimed by the woods

The scope of this Analysis expands out to the point where the Visual Impacts from both private and public actions become negligible both in the temporal and spatial arenas. Temporal being the past, present and future effects bounded by time while spatial refers to the interrelationship of one view shed with another...its Existing Visual Condition (EVC), Visual Absorption Capability (VAC), Biophysical Relationship (BR), Visual Condition (VC) and Visual Impact (VI). A Detailed Assessment Table will be provided for each Visually Sensitive Area (VSA).



Figure 8 - Looking south from Upper Buffalo Wilderness Trailhead

Visual Impact Analysis - Broad Scale Assessment

A thorough Scenic Analysis shows that the planned management of the Robert's Gap Project will have a limited range of Visual Impact both within the Project Boundary and on the surrounding area, all protecting the Visual Resources of the Natural State.

The valuations documented in the Detailed Assessments are:

- Existing Visual Condition (EVC)
- Visual Absorption Capability (VAC)
- Biophysical Relationship (BR)
- Viewing Condition (VC)
- Visual Impact (VI)

The primary concerns evaluated:

- Visual Impact of Actions already having been taken
- Visual Impact of Existing Conditions
- Visual Impact of Proposed Actions in the foreseeable future
- Visual Impact of Potential Future Actions reasonably foreseeable

The Scenic/Visual Impact Analysis shows that the Robert's Gap Project Area is comprised of a wide range of recreational opportunities and scenic views from the contemplative, private views of the many cemeteries peppered throughout the project area to the breathtaking sunrises found while perched on Hawksbill Crag. Those who come to this area expect great things...history, hiking, and height...and they find it...preservation, exploration and inspiration. Explorers flock to this area to experience Arkansas at its best!

A thoughtful plan to care for the forest preserves this identity while doing the necessary work of forest husbandry. Positive Visual Impacts of the Proposed Actions will be the increased health of the forest due to thinning of overgrown areas and the improvement of existing. A concerted effort has been made to preserve the character of the existing experience by limiting the Proposed Treatment Areas (PTA) in each Visually Sensitive Area (VSA) and providing buffers and blended edges that do not interfere with the Visual Integrity of the Project Area.

For site specific information on each VSA per Section, the following has been provided:

- A brief description of the VSA and any pertinent information
- Photos of conditions and views
- A detailed assessment grid using the five valuations

Visual Impact Analysis - Detailed Assessments

Historic Towns and Cemeteries

VSA (Visually Sensitive Area) A – Small Towns

Arkansas is peppered with strangely quaint town names like Pocahtontas, Bald Knob, Toad Suck and Pickle Gap. This portion of the state has its own share of interesting small towns...Pettigrew, Boston, Locust Gap and Red Star to name a few. They are blink-and-you-miss-it unincorporated communities centered around the schoolhouse or the church or the cemetery.

Just a few miles west of the project area is Pettigrew (Madison County), named after a civil engineer with the St. Louis-San Francisco Railway. It developed in the late 1880's around the White River, the Frisco rail line, and hardwood timber stands with a post office established in 1898. The Pettigrew school building is on the National Register of Historic Places and the church building remains. Though Pettigrew is just outside the project area, the Ozark-St. Francis National Forest draws traffic past the town and should have its extended views protected.



Figure 9 - Intersection of AR Hwy 16 and FR1268



Figure 10 - Boston Church est. 1909

Boston is a community centered around the historic Church and Cemetery. The turn to the north is announced by two dilapidated structures that simply represent Arkansas's best history...a testament to those people still standing through time and place. A mile or so up Madison CR3175/FR1268 the church steeple has "1909 Dist No 65" in what seems to be hand painted text on whitewashed wood and the roof is rusted metal. What locals would call an "outhouse" is a two-door wooden structure out back.

Locust Gap and Red Star are just east of Boston and, though they are small communities, Red Star hosts gatherings of forest-goers every year. The annual Buffalo Headwaters Challenge is attended by hundreds of off-road cyclists who stay for 2-3 days and sponsored "botany walks" occur on a regular basis. It is also home to the colorful Headwaters School, a private one-room schoolhouse that supports local homeschoolers.



Figure 11 - Headwaters School outbuilding

Detailed Assessment Table - VSA (A) – Small Towns

ASSESSMENT VALUES	ANALYSIS
Existing Visual Condition (EVC)	
<p>Scale of Existing Views</p> <p>Influence of Visual Landscape Design</p> <p>Influence of Site Disturbance</p> <p>Influence of Vegetative Color & Texture</p>	<p>Views from Boston are primarily short range to the south. Locust Gap views are uphill toward tower on the south side and downward on the northwest side. Red Star has short range views on all side with the exception of southeast toward the headwaters of Little Mulberry Creek.</p> <p>Scattered rural development is rustic with aged structures</p> <p>No Site Disturbance currently visible.</p> <p>A spectacular display of forest hues and variety</p>
Visual Absorption Capability (VAC)	
<p>Slope</p> <p>Aspect</p> <p>Surface Variation</p> <p>Rock/Soil/Vegetative Variety</p>	<p>Boston has high VAC due to the extent of private property insulating it. Locust Gap slopes to north and has a low VAC in relationship to Treatment Areas 111 and 114, but is mostly forested. Red Star has a high VAC due to the nature of its already developed school.</p> <p>All slopes facing inward to the towns are peppered with private property and thick vegetation</p> <p>Heavily wooded forest has a moderately high VAC providing absorption of thinning due to heavy tree cover</p> <p>The views from this VSA are primarily Vegetative with a moderately high absorption capability</p>
Biophysical Relationship (BR)	
<p>Slope</p> <p>Aspect</p> <p>Topographic Variety</p> <p>Vertical Relief</p> <p>Vegetative Variety</p> <p>Adjacent Scenery</p>	<p>This VSA has a Low Biophysical Relationship due to internal views and maximization of relationship due to slope</p> <p>The outward Aspect, VSA looks internally with minimum openness and exposure, causes an extremely low relationship to the surrounding areas</p> <p>The Topographic Variety of ridges and valleys minimizes Visual Impact</p> <p>The Vertical Relief is hidden by close in vegetation and only reveals itself through the private land which has been cleared for fields</p> <p>Vegetation is primarily cultivated private land interspersed with the forest which is Pine and Hardwood</p> <p>The south side of Hwy 16 is primarily forested land with much less cultivated private land</p>

Viewing Condition (VC)	
Viewing Distance	Viewing Distance is primarily short range, flat, and internally focused
Viewing Frequency	Views are infrequent and rarely visited, with no natural pull-offs
Viewing Duration	These small communities are internally focused having to do with private property or forest centered waypoints for the gathering of those heading into the forest
Viewing Angle	Flat inward views
Viewer Expectations	Viewers expectations are centered on home or heading into the forest
Visual Recovery	Visual recovery will be fully achieved due to the minimalized actions proposed
Rehabilitation/Enhancement	The proposed actions are following a course of action that will enhance and encourage regeneration
Visual Impact (VI)	
Silvicultural Methods	Maintain current standards of silviculture for this area using the Shelterwood Method of regeneration
Wildlife Habitat Management	These are exposed areas not conducive to wildlife habitat
Road Management	This path is designated as a State Highway
Recreation Management	Proposed Actions will have low impact on Recreation during implementation within Robert's Gap Project area with no continuous future impact

Figure 12 - VSA (Visually Sensitive Area) A – Small Towns

VSA (Visually Sensitive Area) B – Kings River

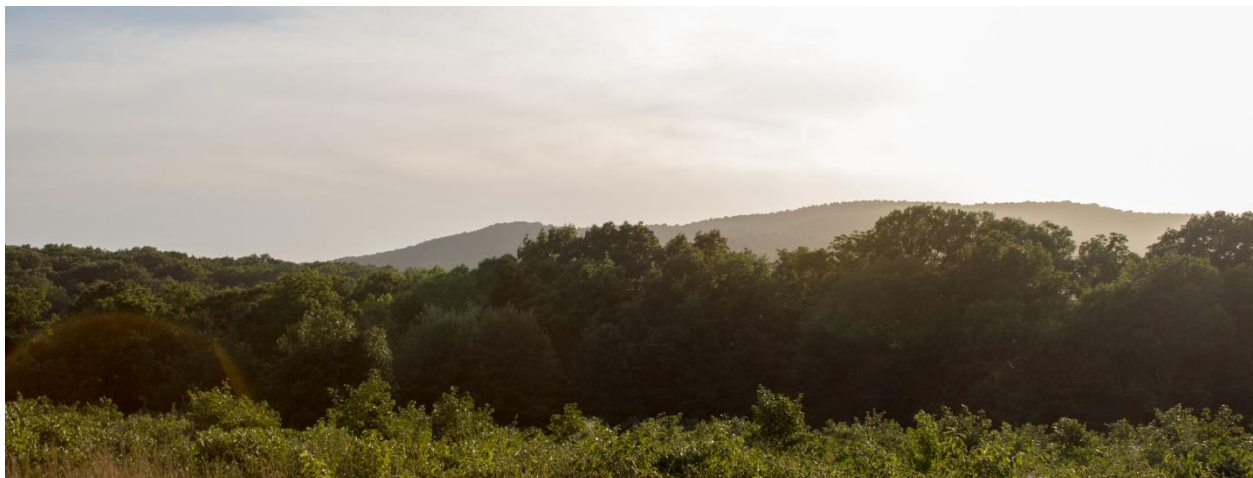


Figure 13 - View to south just before the intersection of FR1251 and FR1268

Forest Road (FR) 1268 is a fairly well-traveled dirt road that leads through almost exclusively private land to a “T” intersection several miles north at FR1269 in the township of Venus. Directly west of that intersection is the Dripping Spring Schoolhouse, built in 1921 and a low water crossing over tributaries forming the headwaters of the Kings River. The well-known trailhead that leads to Kings River Falls is west of the second low water crossing where Walker Hollow and Mitchell Branch combine.



Figure 14 - North of low water crossing



Figure 15 - Kings River Falls, photo by Michele McCoy

Treatment Areas west of FR1268 along its southern portion prior to the intersection of FR1251 and FR1268 are 136-Hardwood Shelterwood, 137-Pine Thinning, and 138-Hardwood Thinning. Proposed timber treatment areas 5, 8, 11, and 12 to the north and east of the Falls should not affect the scenic quality of the area. These consist of thinning and tending operations which have the least visual impact among the different steps of the Shelterwood Silvicultural Process.



Figure 16 - Kings River Falls, photo by Tim Johnson Photography

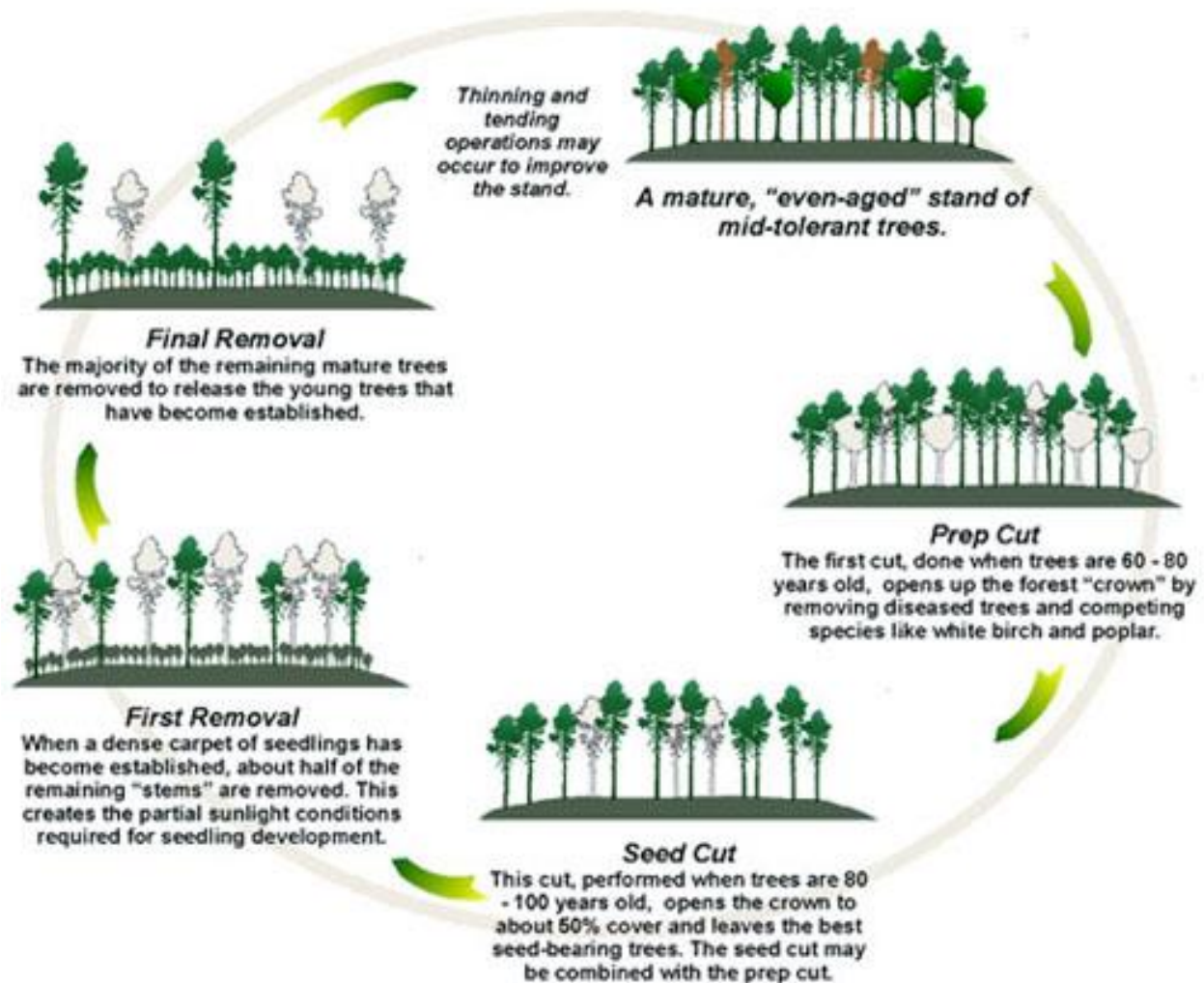


Figure 17 - Shelterwood Silvicultural Process per The Vermilion Forest Management Company Ltd.

An offshoot of FR1268, also heading a bit west and north then east to meet up with the end of FR1269, is FR1251 which is equally dominated by privately owned property. The only treatment areas along this path are areas 1-4 and will only slightly affect the surrounding visuals with minor thinning to improve the stands.

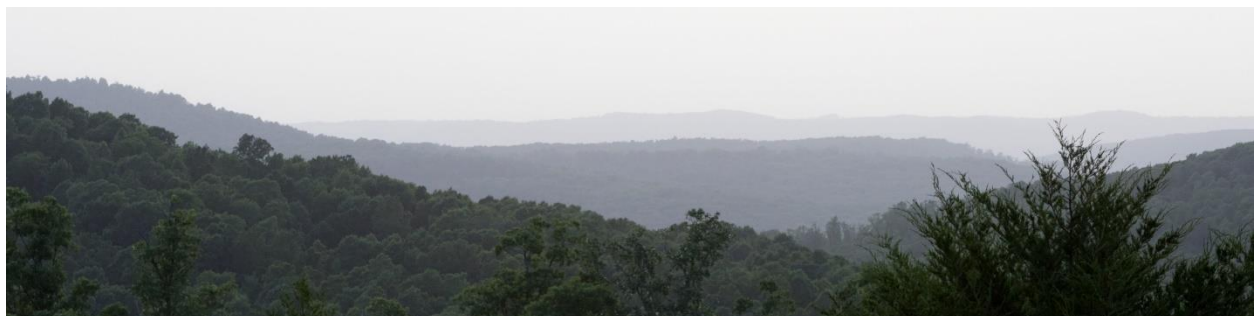


Figure 18 - Expansive Views of privately held forest

Detailed Assessment Table - VSA (B) – Kings River

ASSESSMENT VALUES	ANALYSIS
Existing Visual Condition (EVC)	
Scale of Existing Views Influence of Visual Landscape Design Influence of Site Disturbance Influence of Vegetative Color & Texture	Sweeping views of private land especially when facing south Scattered rural development with well-kept fields No Site Disturbance currently visible outside of private farms A spectacular display of forest and field, hues and variety
Visual Absorption Capability (VAC)	
Slope Aspect Surface Variation Rock/Soil/Vegetative Variety	Rolling hills with wide open field provide low VAC, but there is very little forest area adjacent All slopes facing outward Farmland is primarily cattle with wide open views The views from this VSA are primarily open fields with patches of wooded area
Biophysical Relationship (BR)	
Slope Aspect Topographic Variety Vertical Relief Vegetative Variety Adjacent Scenery	This VSA has a High Biophysical Relationship due to external views and maximization of relationship due to slope The outward Aspect, VSA looks externally with maximum openness and exposure, causes an extremely high relationship to the surrounding areas The Topographic Variety of ridges and valleys maximizes Visual Impact The Vertical Relief is quite visible and reveals itself through the private land which has been cleared for fields Vegetation is primarily cultivated private land interspersed with the forest which is Pine and Hardwood Long-range views to the west are of private cultivated and forested land with views to east being similar
Viewing Condition (VC)	
Viewing Distance Viewing Frequency Viewing Duration Viewing Angle Viewer Expectations Visual Recovery Rehabilitation/Enhancement	Views Viewing Distance is primarily far-reaching Views are frequent and but rarely visited, with no natural pull-offs These small communities are internally focused having to do with private property or forest centered waypoints for the gathering of those heading into the forest South and westward views Viewers expectations are centered on home or heading into the forest Visual recovery will be fully achieved due to the minimalized actions proposed The proposed actions are following a course of action that will enhance and encourage regeneration

Visual Impact (VI)	
Silvicultural Methods	Maintain current standards of silviculture for this area, which are minimal, using the Shelterwood Method of regeneration
Wildlife Habitat Management	These are exposed areas not conducive to wildlife habitat
Road Management	These paths are designated as Madison County roads
Recreation Management	Proposed Actions will have low impact on Recreation during implementation within Robert's Gap Project area with no continuous future impact

Figure 19 - Detailed Assessment Table - VSA (B) – Kings River

VSA (Visually Sensitive Area) C – Cemeteries

Williams Cemetery



Figure 20 - Williams Cemetery, est. March 24, 1944



Figure 21 - - Williams Cemetery in upper left, Dripping Springs in center along FR1269

Eagle Gap Cemetery



Figure 22 - Andrew H. husband of N.L. McFee born Oct. 20, 1830, died Aug. 26, 1896

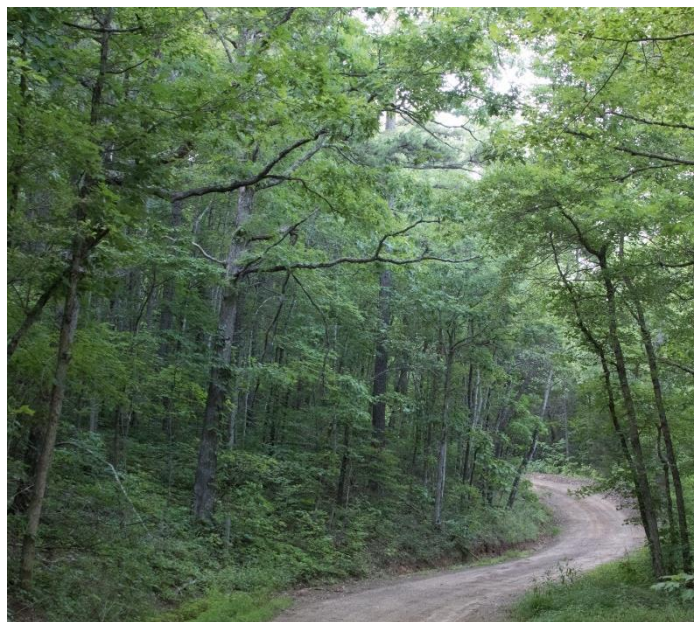
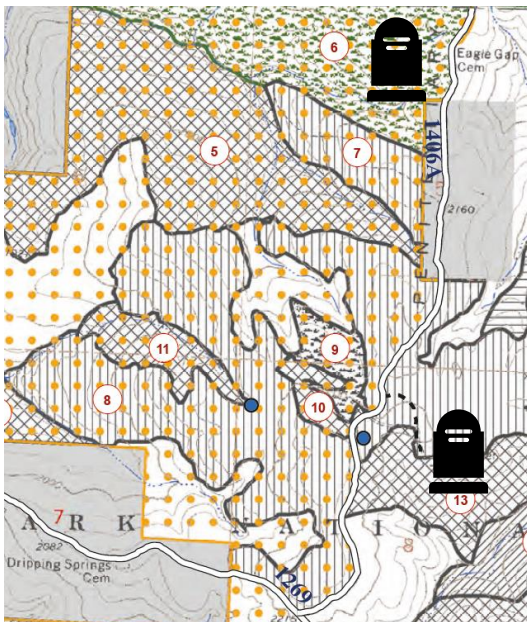


Figure 23 - Eagle Gap upper, Carpenter middle, Location map and drive path lower

Carpenter Cemetery



Figure 24 - Carpenter Cemetery east off FR1406A

Bethel Cemetery



Figure 25 – Reference Map and Old Bethel Cemetery, north of Red Star on FR1270

This portion of the project contains many historic cemeteries and is visually related to another. Williams Cemetery is northwest of Kings River Falls on private property and care should be taken to minimize impacts to views from that location. The same treatment areas that affect the Falls will affect Williams Cemetery. Dripping Springs, also on private property, faces Treatment Areas 8-Pine Thinning, 11 and 12-Hardwood Thinning to the north and 121-Hardwood Thinning and 122-Hardwood Shelterwood Prep to the south. Treatment Areas 143-Hardwood Shelterwood Prep and 144-Hardwood Thinning are on the downhill away slopes which should lessen any visual impact.

Eagle Gap, located on the north border of FR1406A within the project area, is insulated by the proposed TSI Eagle Gap Special Interest Area treatment. Understory or midstory removal should ensure woodland and wild Azalea surroundings with internal views carefully retained.

Carpenter Cemetery is along this same path, but it is not at the immediate roadside. A rough access road leads to an informal parking area with a gated entry. The related Treatment Areas are Hardwood and Pine Thinning and should free up the forest which seems choked.

Old Bethel Cemetery is further east off FR1269 on FR1270 and is nicely maintained. Views are still internal which is appropriate for private viewing of headstones. Treatment Area 19-Hardwood Thinning should provide for an even-aged stand while protecting the visual integrity of the cemetery.

Detailed Assessment Table - VSA (C) – Cemeteries

ASSESSMENT VALUES	ANALYSIS
Existing Visual Condition (EVC)	
Scale of Existing Views	Views from the cemeteries and the paths to them are primarily short range
Influence of Visual Landscape Design	The nature of cemeteries invites a private, internal view
Influence of Site Disturbance	No Site Disturbance currently visible
Influence of Vegetative Color & Texture	The primary impact of vegetation color and texture should be peaceful
Visual Absorption Capability (VAC)	
Slope	All the cemeteries have an inherently low VAC due to the nature of their purpose
Aspect	All locations are relatively flat except for Dripping Springs which has a steep slope off the back end of the cemetery
Surface Variation	Heavily wooded forest gives way rather suddenly to each of the cemeteries
Rock/Soil/Vegetative Variety	The views are primarily Vegetative with a low VAC
Biophysical Relationship (BR)	
Slope	This VSA has a Low Biophysical Relationship due to internal views and minimization of relationship due to lack of slope
Aspect	The inward Aspect causes an extremely low relationship to the surrounding areas
Topographic Variety	The inward nature of the cemeteries creates a low BR
Vertical Relief	Any Vertical Relief is hidden by close in vegetation
Vegetative Variety	The forest is mixed Pine and Hardwood
Adjacent Scenery	Low BR due to insular conditions of a cemetery

Viewing Condition (VC)	
Viewing Distance	Viewing Distance is short range, flat, and internally focused
Viewing Frequency	Views along travel path are infrequent with no natural pull-offs, the cemeteries themselves being the focal points
Viewing Duration	Views along travel path are closed in and brief
Viewing Angle	Flat inward views
Viewer Expectations	Viewers expectations are centered on cemetery or forest
Visual Recovery	Visual recovery will be fully achieved due to the minimal actions proposed
Rehabilitation/Enhancement	The proposed actions are following a course of action that will enhance and encourage regeneration
Visual Impact (VI)	
Silvicultural Methods	Maintain current standards of silviculture for this area using the Shelterwood Method of regeneration
Wildlife Habitat Management	Wildlife openings along this road will be protected or expanded
Road Management	Recommendations are found in the Roberts Gap Travel Management Process report
Recreation Management	Proposed Actions will have low impact on Recreation during implementation within Robert's Gap Project area with no continuous future impact

Figure 26 - Detailed Assessment Table - VSA (C) – Cemeteries

Trails and Treasures

VSA (Visually Sensitive Area) D – Reeves Mountain

North of the Old Bethel Cemetery, heading right at the fork on FR1270, the drive path winds through thick forest. Treatment areas 19, 163, and 23-26, which are primarily Pine and Hardwood Thinning with a very short length of Hardwood Shelterwood, give way to a long stretch of private land. FR1270 continues north to the small community of Reeves through more thinning with Treatment Areas 41-43. Treatment Areas 185 at Evans Hollow and 186 along Reeves Mountain are designated Woodland Restoration, but do not affect the views from FR1270 due to slope, aspect and being hidden by other treatments.

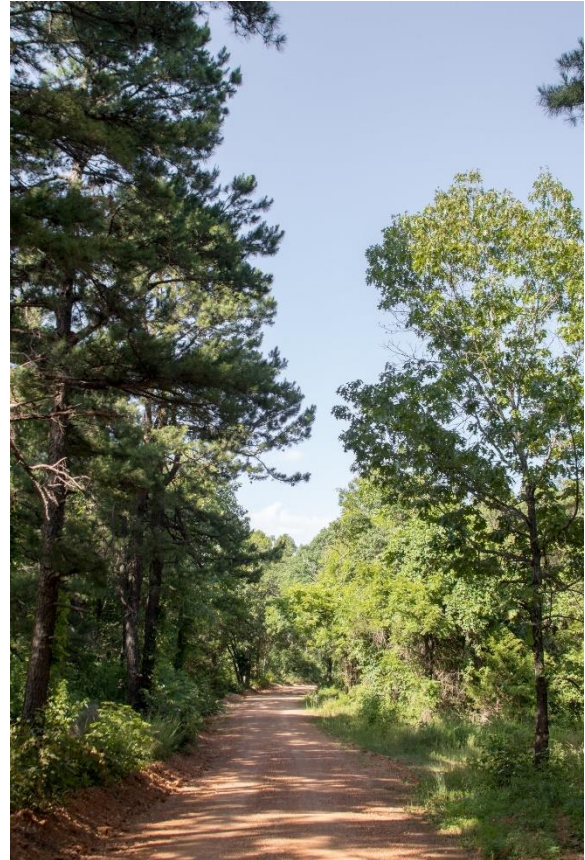


Figure 27 - FR1270 from Old Bethel Cemetery to the community of Reeves and Reeves Mountain

Detailed Assessment Table - VSA (D) – Reeves Mountain

ASSESSMENT VALUES	ANALYSIS
Existing Visual Condition (EVC)	
Scale of Existing Views	Views from FR1270 are primarily short range except for the section of privately-held land
Influence of Visual Landscape Design	Minimal influence aside from private land and the construction of a semi-permanent campsite in one area
Influence of Site Disturbance	No Site Disturbance currently visible
Influence of Vegetative Color & Texture	The primary impact of vegetation color and texture is that of thick forest

Visual Absorption Capability (VAC)	
Slope	The larger portion of the drive path is relatively flat with a high VAC with the northernmost section heading up Reeves Mountain, but is still heavily forested and inward focused
Aspect	The only area where aspect creates a low VAC, meaning that it will have difficulty absorbing any visual impact due to Treatment Areas within its viewshed, is at the private property which provides a view to the east
Surface Variation	Heavily wooded forest gives way rather suddenly to the private land and then returns to heavy forest
Rock/Soil/Vegetative Variety	The views are primarily Vegetative with a high VAC
Biophysical Relationship (BR)	
Slope	This VSA has a Low Biophysical Relationship due to internal views and minimization of relationship due to lack of slope except for views to eastern slopes through the cleared private land
Aspect	The inward Aspect causes an extremely low relationship to the surrounding areas
Topographic Variety	The inward focus of the thick forest creates a low BR
Vertical Relief	Any Vertical Relief is hidden by close in vegetation
Vegetative Variety	The forest is mixed Pine and Hardwood
Adjacent Scenery	Low BR due to limited outward views except at private land
Viewing Condition (VC)	
Viewing Distance	Viewing Distance is short range, flat, and internally focused
Viewing Frequency	Views along travel path are infrequent with no natural pull-offs
Viewing Duration	Views along travel path are closed in and brief
Viewing Angle	Flat inward views
Viewer Expectations	Viewers expectations are centered on home or forest
Visual Recovery	Visual recovery will be fully achieved due to the minimal actions proposed
Rehabilitation/Enhancement	The proposed actions are following a course of action that will enhance and encourage regeneration
Visual Impact (VI)	
Silvicultural Methods	Maintain current standards of silviculture for this area using the Shelterwood Method of regeneration
Wildlife Habitat Management	Wildlife openings along this road will be protected or expanded
Road Management	Recommendations are found in the Roberts Gap Travel Management Process report
Recreation Management	Proposed Actions will have low impact on Recreation during implementation within Robert's Gap Project area with no continuous future impact

Figure 28 - Detailed Assessment Table - VSA (D) - Reeves Mountain

VSA (Visually Sensitive Area) E – Cave Mnt. Trailhead, Buffalo Creek Trail and the Fire Tower

The portion of the Upper Buffalo along FR 1271 is packed with a host of incredible trails and stunning locations. The Upper Buffalo Mountain Bike Trails offer challenging, single-track paths with names like Azalea falls, Trail of the Ancients, and Twisted Hickory. The Knucklehead is a double-track trail that has its trailhead on FR1410 (Kapark Rd) near the cemetery and drops over 400' while its sister trail, Knuckles Creek Road Trail, starts from FR1271 and follows FR1413 and FR1476 to drop over 620' into the forest. The Cave Mountain Trailhead on FR1271 provides access from the northwest while the Knucklehead Trailhead provides entry from the east on FR1410.



Figure 29 - Water crossing, photo by Leslie Kehmeier

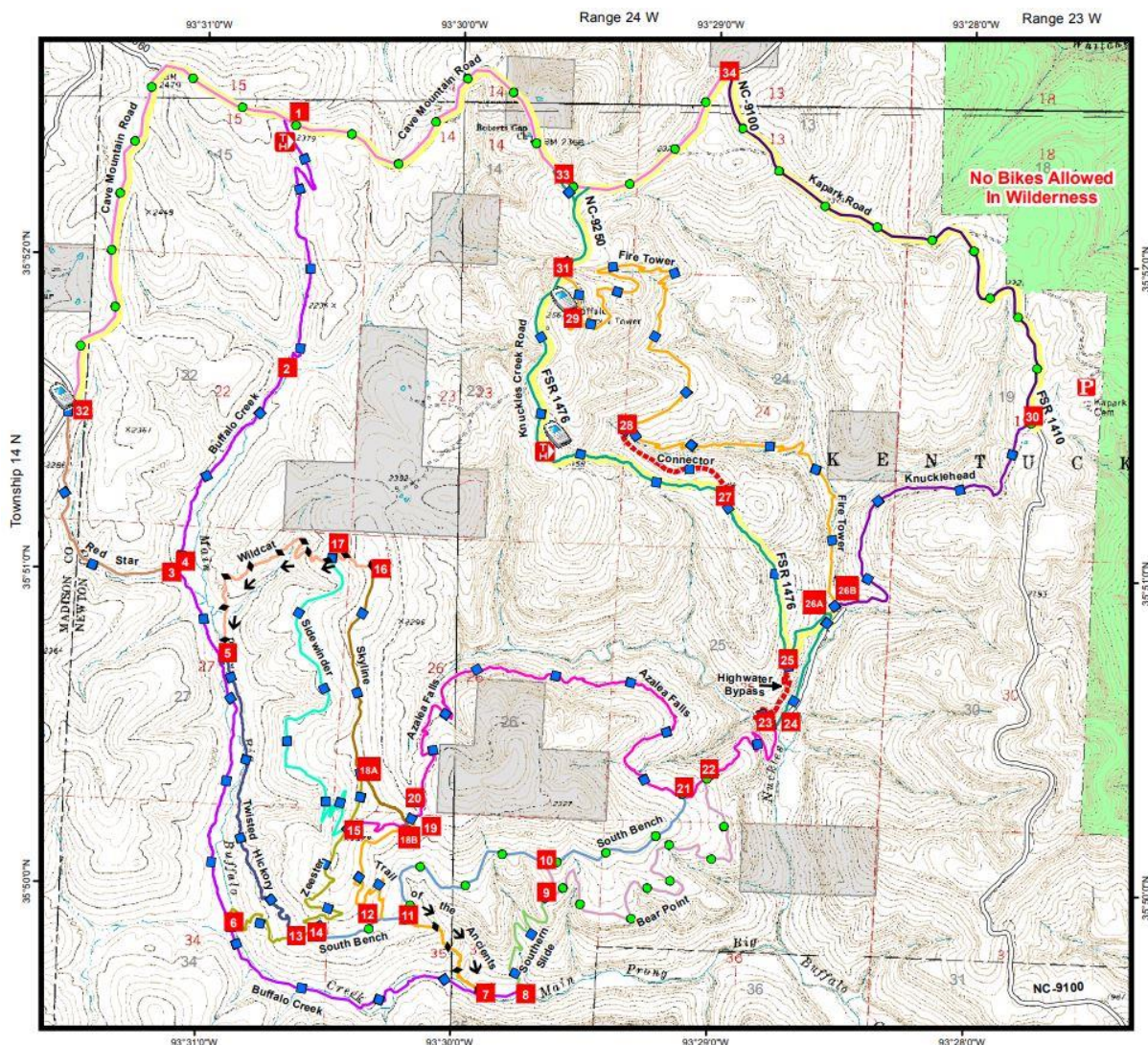


Figure 30 - Upper Buffalo Mountain Bike Trail Reference Map

The Proposed Action includes the decommissioning of 2.58 miles of trail, preserving 39.91 miles of existing trail, and the addition of 22.88 miles of biking trail. The proposed Treatments Areas are detailed and fine-tuned in order to surgically thin and defend both forest and woodland while providing for this much-valued form of recreation. Most areas are selective Pine or Hardwood Thinning, but even the few Release treatments are “manual”, carefully done by hand. This is due to both the designation of Buffalo Creek, the headwaters of the protected Buffalo River, as a Wild Scenic River and the nature of the internal views experienced by the primary users of the trails.

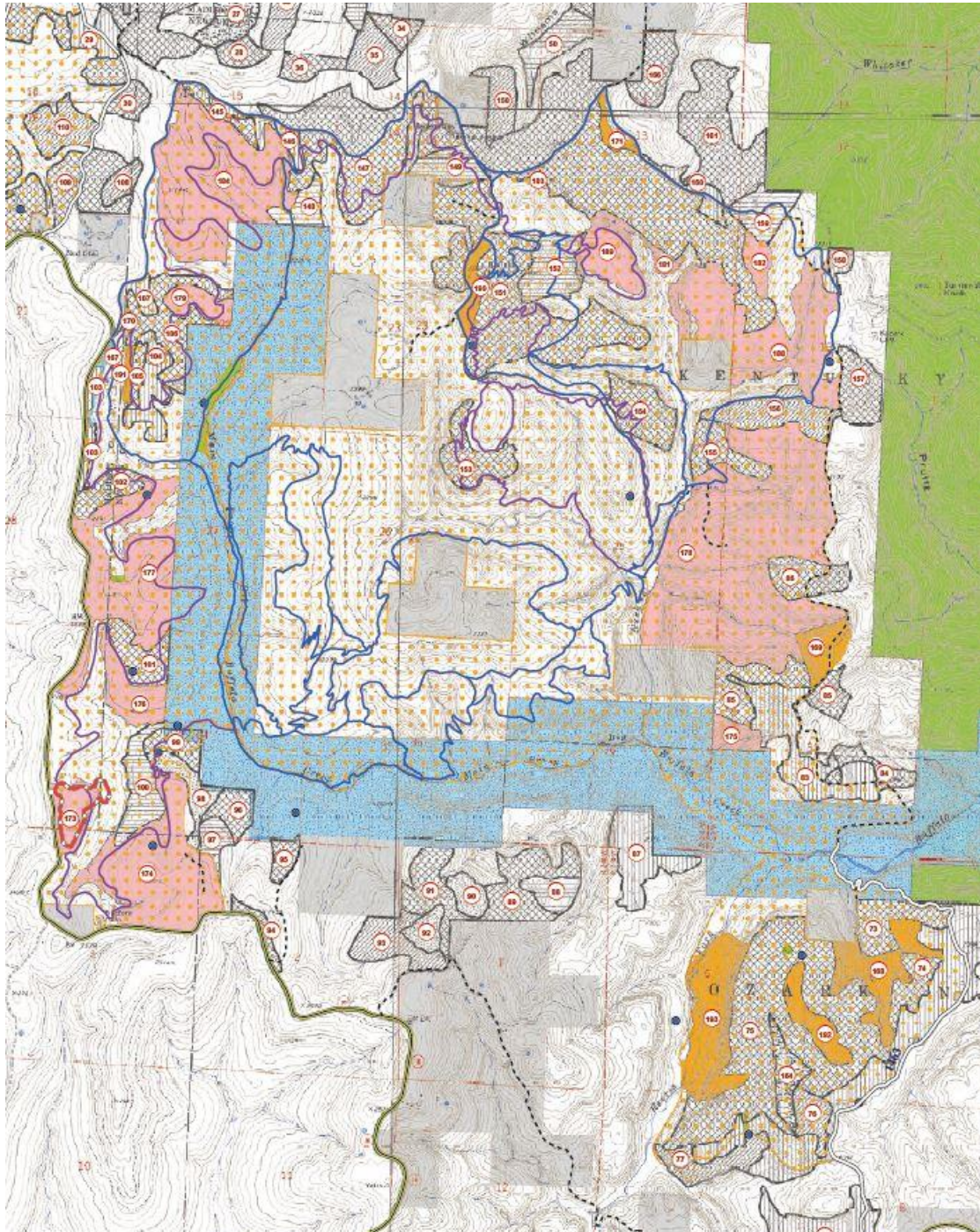


Figure 31 - Upper Buffalo Mountain Bike Trail Treatment Area Reference Map



Figure 32 - The Fire Tower on FR1271

Detailed Assessment Table - VSA (E) – Cave Mnt. Trailhead, Buffalo Creek Trail and the Fire Tower

ASSESSMENT VALUES	ANALYSIS
Existing Visual Condition (EVC)	
Scale of Existing Views	Views from the trails are primarily short range except for the Fire Tower
Influence of Visual Landscape Design	Minimal influence aside from the construction of existing trails
Influence of Site Disturbance	No Site Disturbance currently visible except for private
Influence of Vegetative Color & Texture	The primary impact of vegetation color and texture is that of thick forest
Visual Absorption Capability (VAC)	
Slope	The larger portion of the drive path is relatively flat with a high VAC
Aspect	The only area where aspect creates a low VAC, meaning that it will have difficulty absorbing any visual impact due to Treatment Areas within its viewshed, is at the Fire Tower, but is still heavily forested and inward focused
Surface Variation	Heavily wooded forest wood land, returning to heavy forest
Rock/Soil/Vegetative Variety	The views are primarily internal and varied with a high VAC

Biophysical Relationship (BR)	
Slope	This VSA has a High Biophysical Relationship due to internal views and maximization of relationship due to slope which is used to add to the challenge and experience The inward Aspect causes an extremely high relationship to the surroundings The inward focus of the thick forest would normally create a low BR, but the trails are traditionally laid out to take advantage of the Topographic Variety Any Vertical Relief is sometimes hidden by close in vegetation The forest is mixed Pine and Hardwood Low BR due to limited outward views except at Fire Tower
Aspect	
Topographic Variety	
Vertical Relief	
Vegetative Variety	
Adjacent Scenery	
Viewing Condition (VC)	
Viewing Distance	Short range, extremely varied, and internally focused except at Fire Tower where the Viewing Distance is far reaching Views along biking paths are frequent Views along biking paths are closed in and quick unless a purposeful stop is made Varied inward views except at Fire Tower Viewers expectations are centered on the challenge and experience of mountain biking or on the forest itself Visual recovery will be fully achieved due to the minimal actions proposed The proposed actions are following a course of action that will enhance and encourage regeneration
Viewing Frequency	
Viewing Duration	
Viewing Angle	
Viewer Expectations	
Visual Recovery	
Rehabilitation/Enhancement	
Visual Impact (VI)	
Silvicultural Methods	Maintain current standards of silviculture for this area using the Shelterwood Method of regeneration, surgically thin and defend both forest and woodland while providing for this much-valued form of recreation Wildlife openings along this road will be protected or expanded, there are many existing ponds and the Woodland Restoration should provide forage for habitat Recommendations are found in the Roberts Gap Travel Management Process report Proposed Actions will have low impact on Recreation during implementation within Robert’s Gap Project area with no continuous negative future impact, the addition of trails in this area are of a nature that work with the landscape and not against it
Wildlife Habitat Management	
Road Management	
Recreation Management	

Figure 33 - VSA (E) – Cave Mnt. Trailhead, Buffalo Creek Trail and the Fire Tower

VSA (Visually Sensitive Area) F – Whitaker Point (Hawksbill Crag), Cave Mountain Church, and Robert's Gap

The namesake for this project area is Roberts Gap, one of two historic churches in this particular VSA. The other is Cave Mountain Church and Cemetery. In a project that contains so many schoolhouses, churches, and cemeteries, other types of education, homes of worship, and places of rest can be found in the forest. A perfect example of this is Hawksbill Crag.



Figure 34 - Whitaker Point also known as Hawksbill Crag

Likely the most famous destination within the scope of this project is Whitaker Pt., better known as Hawksbill Crag. The trail is a tough hike with amazing, not to mention dangerous, rock formations that are extremely popular photography spots. They also provide ideal locations to view the Wilderness area to the east.

The drive path, FR1271 (Rd 5), heads south off Hwy 21 and winds up steeply through thick forest and rock formations. This internally focused drive is challenging but rewarded by incredible views as the road climbs. It passes huge rusted treasures (the aged Caterpillar now considered its own waypoint), cemeteries, and some private land mixed with stunning views to the east.

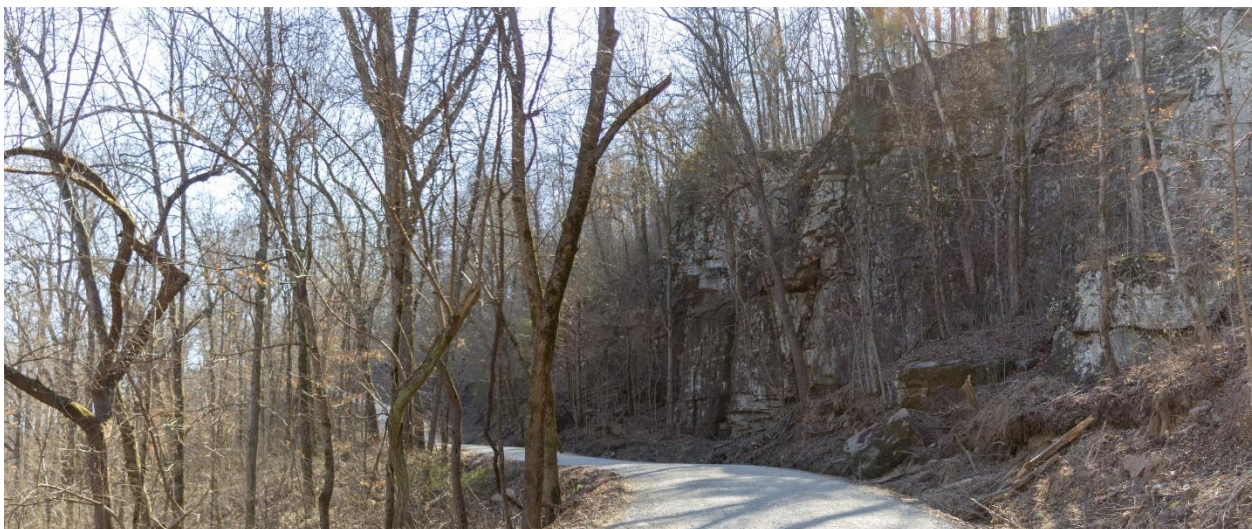


Figure 35 – Bluffs and rock formations along west edge of FR1271



Figure 36 – The steep, winding north end of FR1271 (Rd 5) and the rusted Caterpillar

The Proposed Actions and Alternative 2 actions that affect the Whitaker Point Trailhead include a parking area west of the existing roadside parking, a vault toilet out of view, and a rerouted bit of trail. Alternative 3 places added 90-degree angle parking immediately on the west edge of Cave Mountain Road instead of the Proposed Action and Alternative 2's placing it in the less visually intrusive area slightly away from the road.

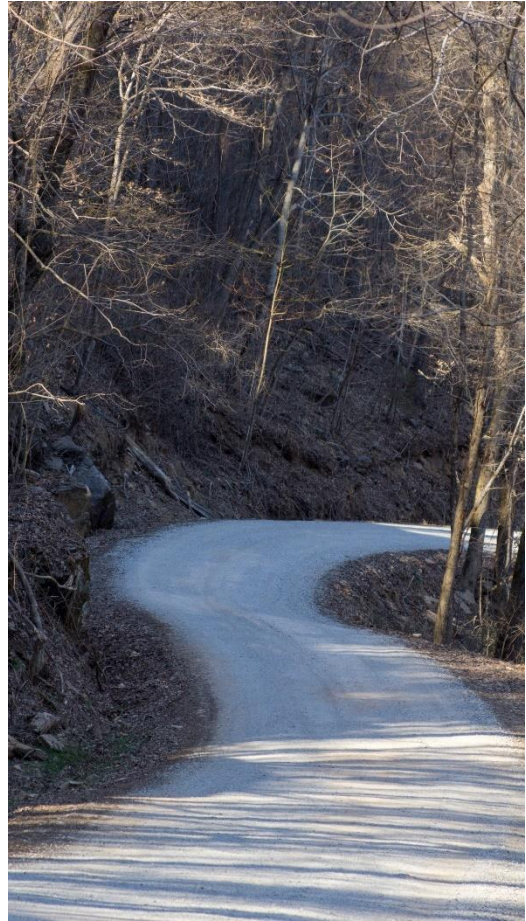


Figure 37 - Intermittent views along east edge of FR1271 (RD 5)

In the professional opinion of this analyst, heavier parking (even as few as 30 vehicles) roadside creates a much larger negative impact on the scenic perceptions of not just those whose destination is Hawksbill Crag, but even more so on those whose intention is to simply travel the forest at large. If the hope is to minimize impact on the Wilderness and perhaps discourage the unplanned and unprepared passersby, drawing the natural curiosity of any traveler who sees a gathering of vehicles for a purpose, then moving the parking out of the drive path would be both advantageous and wise.



Figure 38 - The visual impact of only four vehicles parked on the east side of the road

The current minimal parking at the trailhead is already a bit of an eye sore and the trail entry is a bit difficult to find for a first timer. The presence of even a minimum number of vehicles parked perpendicular to the road is affecting and Alternative 3 calls for as many as 50 parking spaces at a 90-degree angle on the west side of the road (see Fig. above - west would be to the right). The addition of more parking within the field of vision from the road would present an increased visual interruption.

As a frequent explorer in this area and having hiked the trail to Hawksbill Crag, the addition of 50 safe parking spots off the main road and the presence of a vault toilet after a vigorous 2.9 mile hike in and out with an outward, upward ascent of 413 feet would be priceless and best placed visually distant from Cave Mountain Rd as planned in the original Proposed Actions. In order to preserve the beauty and quietness of the drive path as well as the perception of a Wilderness area, it is recommended that this specific portion of the Proposed Actions not be modified.

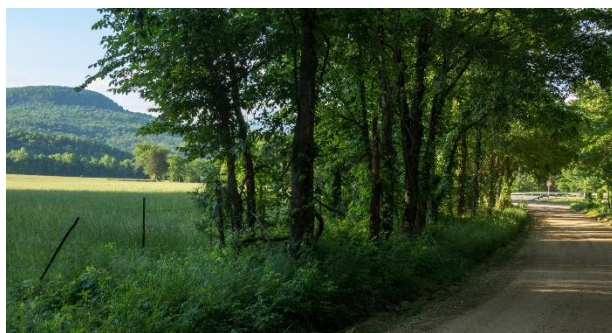


Figure 40 - Looking north toward Hwy 21 from FR1271



Figure 39 - Looking south, uphill on FR1271

Cave Mountain Church and Cemetery is just north of Whitaker Point/Hawksbill Crag on FR1271. It is a lovely site and the approach is a wide, smooth roadway. Even the outhouses are picturesque due to the contrast of old vs new. Proposed Treatment Areas 51-56, a combination of thinning and shelterwood, are buffered by private land to the west of the cemetery. Robert's Gap Church is also insulated by privately owned forest and slope falling away. Treatment Areas 147, 149, and 150 are downslope from the church which is mostly hidden from view by the forest itself.



Figure 41 - Cave Mountain Church and Cemetery

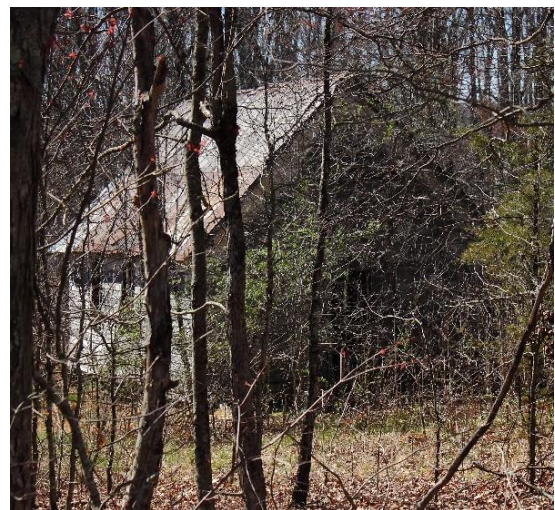


Figure 42 - Robert's Gap, photo by Dan Davis

Detailed Assessment Table - VSA (F) – Whitaker Point (Hawksbill Crag), Cave Mountain Church, and Robert's Gap

ASSESSMENT VALUES	ANALYSIS
Existing Visual Condition (EVC)	
Scale of Existing Views	<p>Whitaker Point Trail – a blend of internal, short range and external, incredibly long range views</p> <p>Hawksbill Crag - outward view for miles into the Wilderness area</p> <p>Cave Mnt Church – mid-range views due to wide road, forest moves away from drive path, open space of cemetery</p> <p>Robert's Gap – extreme inward, short range view</p>
Influence of Visual Landscape Design	<p>Whitaker Point Trail – Minimal to no influence except at trailhead with parking along the side of road where the intrusion is awkward at best</p> <p>Hawksbill Crag - evidence of human disturbance is completely absent except for the trail itself and is protected by the Wilderness designation</p> <p>Cave Mnt Church – extensive development and maintenance is visible, but well done</p> <p>Robert's Gap – the dilapidated church almost consumed by the forest is the only visual influence</p>
Influence of Site Disturbance	<p>Whitaker Point Trail – the trailhead is the primary source of site disturbance and proves to be awkward and visually disorganized</p> <p>Hawksbill Crag - none</p> <p>Cave Mnt Church – negligible due to expectations natural to a small church and cemetery</p> <p>Robert's Gap – the site is left undisturbed due to its already state of absorption by the forest</p>
Influence of Vegetative Color & Texture	<p>Whitaker Point Trail – ideal existing visual condition due to variety and blend of forest</p> <p>Hawksbill Crag - outward view for miles into the Wilderness area with a palette of greens, blues, haze and sky are what makes this waypoint a must see visit</p> <p>Cave Mnt Church – forest that surrounds the site adds to the expected atmosphere of an historic one room church with its cemetery</p> <p>Robert's Gap – there is just something about a church born in another time that has been lost TO time and been consumed by nature that stirs the soul. The browns and greens that have gently painted the views of this building do stir the soul</p>

Visual Absorption Capability (VAC)	
Slope	<p>Whitaker Point Trail – The trailhead has an extremely low VAC at this time due to the visual interruption of the parking area on the flat portions immediately adjacent to the roadway. The proposed actions that involve moving the parking out of the viewshed and into its own designated area would improve the visuals at the trailhead greatly. The trail itself is challenging with both uphill and downhill climbs and is primarily protected from treatment by the Wilderness designation</p> <p>Hawksbill Crag - n/a, the Visual Absorption Capability at the Crag is protected by its Wilderness designation</p> <p>Cave Mnt Church – low absorption due to a flat slope</p> <p>Robert's Gap – this area is an inward view that makes it difficult to absorb any disturbance</p>
Aspect	<p>Whitaker Point Trail – the trail is a mix of inward aspect and outward aspect protected by the Wilderness designation except for the existing trails that are briefly trespassing on private land</p> <p>Cave Mnt Church – VAC is high due to a relatively flat site that is buffered by the forest preventing views into Treatment Areas</p> <p>Robert's Gap – extreme inward, no real aspect</p>
Surface Variation	<p>Whitaker Point Trail – the trail reveals a wonderful range of surfaces...water crossings, stone outcroppings, uphill and downhill climbs</p> <p>Cave Mnt Church – high VAC due to developed and maintained condition existing</p> <p>Robert's Gap – low VAC due to dense forest surrounding the church</p>
Rock/Soil/Vegetative Variety	<p>Whitaker Point Trail – the trail is marked by a variety</p> <p>Cave Mnt Church – high VAC due to developed and maintained condition existing</p> <p>Robert's Gap – low VAC due to dense forest surrounding the church</p>
Biophysical Relationship (BR)	
Slope	<p>Whitaker Point Trail – The trail itself is inward facing with limited Biophysical Relationship to external conditions</p> <p>Hawksbill Crag - n/a, the Visual Absorption Capability at the Crag is protected by its Wilderness designation</p> <p>Cave Mnt Church – low absorption due to a flat slope</p> <p>Robert's Gap – this area is an inward view that makes it difficult to absorb any disturbance</p>

Aspect	<p>Whitaker Point Trail – the early portions of the trail are a mix of inward aspect and outward aspect protected by the Wilderness designation except for the existing trails that are briefly trespassing on private land</p> <p>Hawksbill Crag - spectacular aspect (the opposing hillsides) viewed from both the eastern portion of the trail and the Crag itself creates an extremely high Biophysical Relationship</p> <p>Cave Mnt Church – BR is high due to a relatively flat site that is buffered by the forest preventing views into Treatment Areas while being surrounded by the forest itself and being deeply related to it</p> <p>Robert's Gap – extreme inward, no real aspect</p>
Topographic Variety	<p>Whitaker Point Trail – the exposed flat topography of the trailhead and parking is in stark comparison with the steep topography of the trail</p> <p>Hawksbill Crag - the dramatic contrast of relatively steep trail to sheer drop of the bluffs creates an extremely high Biophysical Relationship not only with the hills opposite, but with the disappearing surface often just to the side of the path</p> <p>Cave Mnt Church – flat topography exposes the whole site</p> <p>Robert's Gap – slight slope</p>
Vertical Relief	<p>Whitaker Point Trail – the western section of trail is marked by a variety of slopes and vertical outcroppings, but they are primarily short range views limiting BR while the views become more outward on the eastern section providing an increasing BR</p> <p>Hawksbill Crag - the primary draw for visitors, drastic and dangerous</p> <p>Cave Mnt Church – negligible</p> <p>Robert's Gap – negligible</p>
Vegetative Variety Adjacent Scenery	<p>The forest is mixed Pine and Hardwood</p> <p>Whitaker Point Trail – the only troubling portion is the trailhead and existing parking which could be resolved by moving parking out of the viewshed</p> <p>Hawksbill Crag - extremely high Biophysical Relationship precisely due to the adjacent scenery viewed from the Crag and other nearby outcroppings</p> <p>Cave Mnt Church – forest</p> <p>Robert's Gap – forest</p>

Viewing Condition (VC)	
Viewing Distance	Whitaker Point Trail – the western section of trail has primarily short distance views while the views become more outward on the eastern section providing an increasing VC
Viewing Frequency	Hawksbill Crag - long range viewing distance Cave Mnt Church – mid range viewing distance Robert's Gap – short range viewing distance Whitaker Point Trail – views are available at literally every step on the trail and it is heavily visited, the trailhead is viewed not only by hikers, but by every vehicle that passes...private landowners, forest road explorers Hawksbill Crag – high frequency of visits Cave Mnt Church – high viewing frequency due to its proximity to the road Robert's Gap – lower frequency due to its hidden nature
Viewing Duration	Whitaker Point Trail – the trail is 2.9 miles and requires from 2-4 hours out and back with excellent viewing conditions throughout. This leaves one vehicle per 1-4 visitor at the side of the road near the trailhead Hawksbill Crag – duration ranges from short stops to the time it takes to have a wedding, picnic or nap Cave Mnt Church – viewing duration is usually extended due to nature of cemetery and function of church Robert's Gap – lower duration due to its hidden nature
Viewing Angle	Whitaker Point Trail – The trailhead has flat viewing angle, the trail itself has fairly steep viewing angles Hawksbill Crag – down and out views Cave Mnt Church –flat Robert's Gap – slight angle
Viewer Expectations	Whitaker Point Trail – Expectations for the trailhead do not include a large display of vehicles and a vault toilet. Those amenities are truly necessary, but better found off the main traffic pattern. Expectations for the trail are for breathtaking experiences and views. Hawksbill Crag – Viewers expect risk, danger, long hike and great rewards including a view that lives up to all the photographs they've seen of the Crag and the Wilderness Cave Mnt Church – it is not a surprise for a forest explorer to find buildings or machines consumed by the forest. It is also not surprising to find a secluded cemetery. These conditions are expected and welcomed in order to add to the experience. Robert's Gap – this is often an unexpected view thoroughly welcomed

Visual Recovery	Whitaker Point Trail – If this part of the Proposed Actions or Alternative 2 is implemented (not Alternative 3) with parking removed from the drive path and the addition of a vault toilet, there is the benefit of a high Visual Recovery allowing the forest to grow back to the road edges and the views to move in line with viewer expectations
Rehabilitation/Enhancement	Hawksbill Crag – n/a Cave Mnt Church –n/a Robert's Gap – n/a The proposed actions are following a course of action that will enhance and encourage regeneration
Visual Impact (VI)	
Silvicultural Methods	Maintain current standards of silviculture for this area using the Shelterwood Method of regeneration, surgically thin and defend both forest and woodland while providing for this much-valued form of recreation
Wildlife Habitat Management	This drive path to heavily traveled to encourage habitat
Road Management	Recommendations are found in the Roberts Gap Travel Management Process report
Recreation Management	Proposed Actions will have temporary high impact on Recreation during implementation with high return on the investment if this part of the Proposed Actions or Alternative 2 is implemented (not Alternative 1 or 3)

Figure 43 - Detailed Assessment Table - VSA (F) – Whitaker Pt, Cave Mtn Church, and Robert's Gap



Figure 44 - Those who travel the forest expect greying structures, woodland, and trails

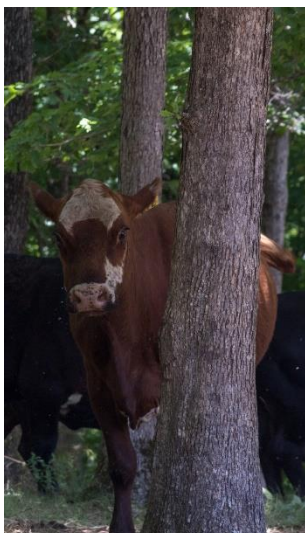
Dahl and Dixon Ford

VSA (Visually Sensitive Area) G – Mossville, Cassville and Curtis Church/Cemetery

FR1215 (NC9060/Edgmon Rd 410) turns west off Hwy 21 at the Mossville Cemetery and passes the most picturesque homes and ranches as well as intermittent bits of Ozark-St. Francis National Forest. The only Treatment Areas affecting this area are TA 59 and 60, both Hardwood Thinning, which should have a very low impact.



Figure 45 - Mossville Cemetery and views along FR1215



This VSA includes Cassville Cemetery on the north side of Liggetts Rd and Curtis Cemetery, both on private land and backed up against protected Wilderness along Terrapin Branch and Buffalo River's wild scenic river designation.

Detailed Assessment Table - VSA (Visually Sensitive Area) G – FR1215 Mossville

ASSESSMENT VALUES	ANALYSIS
Existing Visual Condition (EVC)	
Scale of Existing Views	Often wide open
Influence of Visual Landscape Design	Extensive due to mostly private
Influence of Site Disturbance	No Site Disturbance currently visible except for private
Influence of Vegetative Color & Texture	The primary impact of vegetation color and texture is that of open field
Visual Absorption Capability (VAC)	
Slope	The larger portion of the drive path is rolling hills and fields
Aspect	Aspect viewed from primarily open drive path is broad
Surface Variation	Mostly field with interspersed wooded area
Rock/Soil/Vegetative Variety	Open drive path with already developed farmland creates a high VAC
Biophysical Relationship (BR)	
Slope	High BR due to open road and field
Aspect	Highly interrelated due to views outward to facing hillsides
Topographic Variety	The intermittent forest contrasts with the openness of the already developed private land
Vertical Relief	The rolling hills provide vertical relief
Vegetative Variety	The forest is mixed Pine and Hardwood
Adjacent Scenery	Due to open nature of road and broad fields, adjacent scenery creates a high Biophysical Relationship
Viewing Condition (VC)	
Viewing Distance	Primarily long range
Viewing Frequency	Views along open, private land are frequent
Viewing Duration	Extended duration
Viewing Angle	Varied, but primarily outward and down
Viewer Expectations	Viewers expectations are centered on private land
Visual Recovery	Visual recovery will be fully achieved due to the minimal thinning actions proposed
Rehabilitation/Enhancement	The proposed actions are following a course of action that will enhance and encourage regeneration
Visual Impact (VI)	
Silvicultural Methods	Maintain current standards using minimal thinning
Wildlife Habitat Management	Primarily private cattle, no Wildlife Actions Proposed
Road Management	County Rd
Recreation Management	n/a

Figure 46 - VSA (Visually Sensitive Area) G – FR1215 Mossville

VSA (Visually Sensitive Area) H – Dahl Memorial and The Tree

West of Hwy 16/21 on FR1463 (NC9100), in the midst of a million other trees, exists one of the most beautiful trees in Arkansas. It can be found just north of the Jerry Dahl Memorial dedicated to the memory of a forest supervisor and is plainly visible on satellite maps due to its size. The tree shades a dispersed campsite that also acts as a trailhead for hikes to Adkins Creek with two waterfalls, Leaning Log and Adkins Canyon Falls. This area acts as the southern trailhead, directly south from both the central Kapark Trailhead and northern Whitakers Point (Hawksbill Crag) trailheads, for the Upper Buffalo Wilderness area.



Figure 47 - Dahl Memorial



Figure 48 - Dispersed campsite/trailhead with The Tree

Treatment Areas 71-Hardwood Shelterwood, 72-Pine Thinning, 76-Hardwood Shelterwood Prep, and 78-Pine Thinning are the Proposed Actions that are adjacent to or affecting this area and the necessary drive path. Thinning along FR1463 will have minimal visual impact while Shelterwood Prep is more intrusive. It is suggested that TA 76 leave a 50' buffer between the treatment area and the roadside to lessen the impact.

TA 71-Hardwood Shelterwood near the eastern end of FR1463 is remote though directly in the visual line of a "bushwhacking" hiking path that leads to Leaning Log and Adkins Canyon Falls. Care should be taken to preserve views along Adkins Creek. The Proposed Action for Road Maintenance from TA 71 on FR1463 to the intersection with FR1410 should be planned very carefully so as not to compact the soils around "The Tree".

It is a common misconception that a tree's roots grow only to the same footprint of the canopy above. This is simplistic and inaccurate in most cases. The roots of "The Tree" may extend far outside the extensive canopy and may intertwine with other forest trees. It is critical to keep any Pre-Haul Road Maintenance as far from the root structure of this Visually Sensitive Area as feasible.



Figure 49 - FR1463 Typical Visual Condition



Figure 50 - FR1463 as it continues past "The Tree" to TA 71-Hardwood Shelterwood

Detailed Assessment Table - VSA (Visually Sensitive Area) H – Dahl Memorial and The Tree

ASSESSMENT VALUES	ANALYSIS
Existing Visual Condition (EVC)	
Scale of Existing Views	Inward and short range views
Influence of Visual Landscape Design	The Memorial and The Tree are the obvious human influence on the landscape. The use of the dispersed camping and primitive hiking have left their mark and created a visual waypoint that has now become part of the character of the area
Influence of Site Disturbance	Site Disturbance currently visible due to the Memorial and The Tree
Influence of Vegetative Color & Texture	The primary impact of vegetation color and texture is that of forest greens and sunlight
Visual Absorption Capability (VAC)	
Slope	The larger portion of the drive path is flat
Aspect	Aspect limited due to closeness of forest leaving the main road with a High Absorption Capability except for the area at the Memorial and The Tree which have an extremely low VAC requiring a buffer and care with Pre-Haul Road Maintenance
Surface Variation	Heavy forest
Rock/Soil/Vegetative Variety	Heavy forest except for the opening at The Tree
Biophysical Relationship (BR)	
Slope	Flat slope
Aspect	Limited aspect
Topographic Variety	Area mostly flat
Vertical Relief	The primary vertical relief is that of tight, closed in forest to the dramatic opening up of the forest that nurtures The Tree surrounded by a large dispersed camping site
Vegetative Variety	The forest is mixed Pine and Hardwood
Adjacent Scenery	Due to dense forest, except for The Tree, adjacent scenery is limited to close proximity views to the forest that creates a low Biophysical Relationship
Viewing Condition (VC)	
Viewing Distance	Primarily short range
Viewing Frequency	Views are limited with the exception of The Tree
Viewing Duration	Extended duration of the limited views due to focal point
Viewing Angle	Flat until The Tree which directs the view straight up into the canopy
Viewer Expectations	Viewers expectations are centered on camping or hiking
Visual Recovery	With care taken to buffer the Shelterwood/Prep treatments, visual recovery can be fully achieved

Rehabilitation/Enhancement	The proposed actions are following a course of action that will enhance and encourage regeneration, but care must be taken to route Pre-Haul Maintenance as far from The Tree as can be done.
Visual Impact (VI)	
Silvicultural Methods	Maintain current standards of silviculture for this area, which are minimal, using the Shelterwood Method of regeneration
Wildlife Habitat Management	Several ponds and wildlife openings exist in this VSA
Road Management	Proposed Actions will change southwest portion of FR1463 to OML2 and the northeast portion that leads to TA 71 will be Pre-Haul Maintenance and needs to avoid compaction at The Tree
Recreation Management	Proposed Actions will have low impact on Recreation during implementation within Robert's Gap Project area with no continuous future impact

Figure 51 - VSA (Visually Sensitive Area) H – Dahl Memorial and The Tree

VSA (Visually Sensitive Area) I – Dixon Ford

Dixon Ford is water crossing with dispersed camping found when turning north at the intersection of FR1463 and FR1410. FR1410 (also called Kapark Rd) crosses the Buffalo just as it changes from Creek to River with addition of flow from Reeves Fork and is protected by the Wild Scenic Rivers designation. This path that would best be traveled by a 4WD then heads up the mountain to connect with FR1271 near Ryker. It passes the proposed Knucklehead Trailhead, the eastern side of the Upper Buffalo Mountain Bike Trails and Kapark Cemetery.

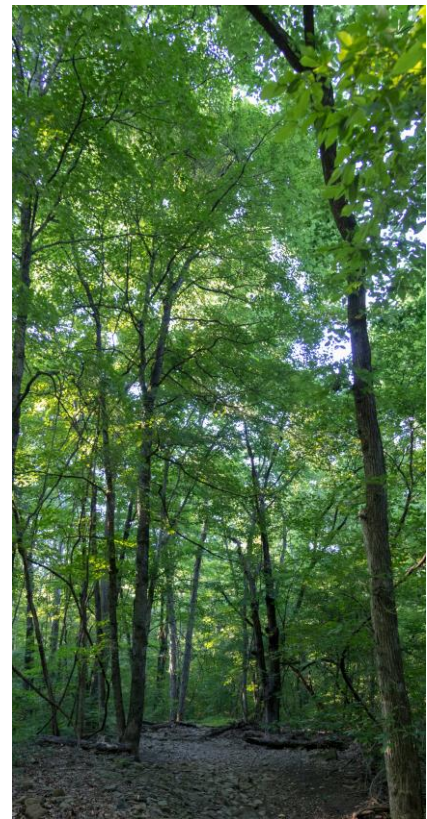


Figure 52 - FR1410 toward Dixon Ford and a dry tributary of the Buffalo River

The Treatment Areas along this route are primarily Pine and Hardwood Thinning along with Woodland Restoration. FR1410 will be designated as Pre-haul Maintenance which, in this case, will potentially encourage traffic to disperse between three primary travel paths instead of the load being carried by FR1271's northeastern path flowing past Whitakers Point (Hawksbill Crag). Thinning would also improve the drivability and views.



Figure 53 - Dixon Ford at Buffalo River



Figure 54 - Kapark Cemetery

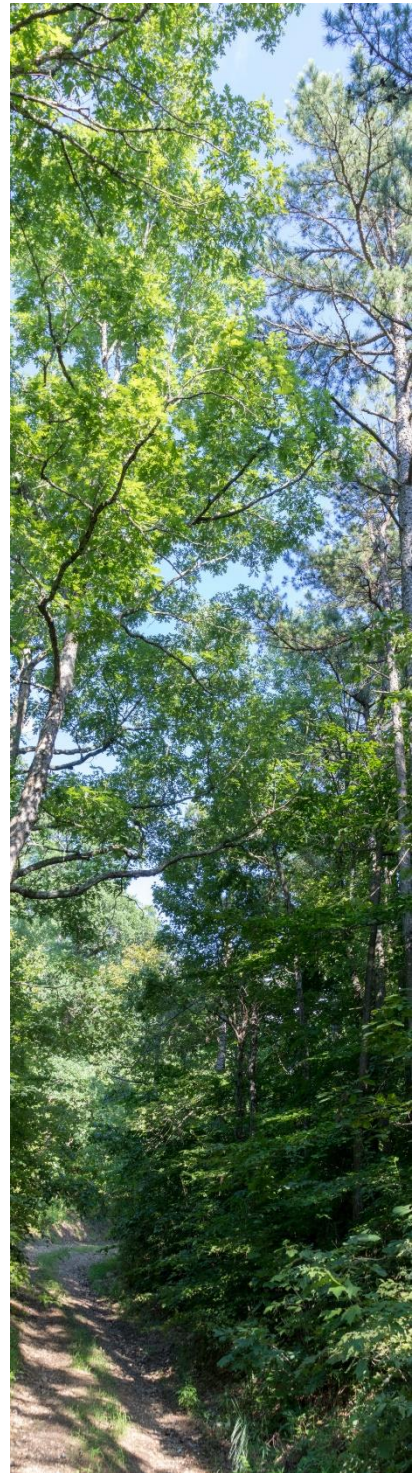


Figure 55 - Heading up from Dixon Ford

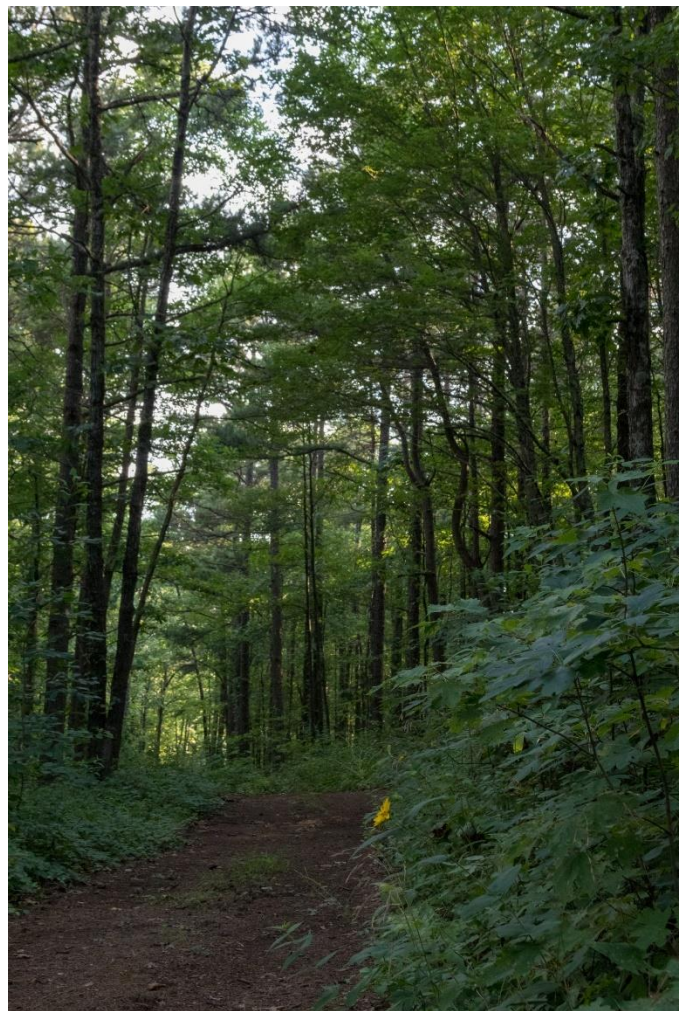
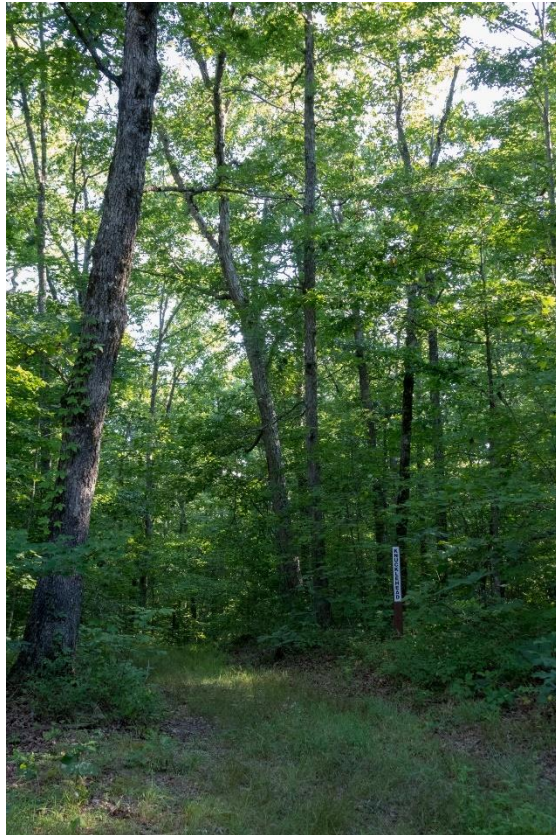


Figure 56 - Kapark Cemetery, a turtle, Knucklehead Trail, Woodland, and FR1410 (Kapark Rd)

Detailed Assessment Table - VSA (Visually Sensitive Area) I – Dixon Ford, Knucklehead, and Kapark

ASSESSMENT VALUES	ANALYSIS
Existing Visual Condition (EVC)	
Scale of Existing Views Influence of Visual Landscape Design Influence of Site Disturbance Influence of Vegetative Color & Texture	Extremely internal and short range Brief and only at trails and Kapark Cemetery No Site Disturbance currently visible except for only at trails and Kapark Cemetery The primary impact of vegetation color and texture is that of seasonally wet Buffalo River and its tributaries in prohibitively close in foliage
Visual Absorption Capability (VAC)	
Slope Aspect Surface Variation Rock/Soil/Vegetative Variety	Steep once past Dixon Ford Internal aspect only Forest and woodland creates high visual absorption Thick rock, seasonal mud and river, deep forest
Biophysical Relationship (BR)	
Slope Aspect Topographic Variety Vertical Relief Vegetative Variety Adjacent Scenery	This VSA has a Low Biophysical Relationship due to internal nature of difficult road The inward Aspect causes an extremely low relationship to the surrounding areas, too focused on road From flat at River crossing to steep route up FR1410 Any Vertical Relief is sometimes hidden by close in vegetation The forest is mixed Pine and Hardwood Low BR due to limited outward views
Viewing Condition (VC)	
Viewing Distance Viewing Frequency Viewing Duration Viewing Angle Viewer Expectations Visual Recovery Rehabilitation/Enhancement	Primarily short range Existing view is limited to Dixon Ford at Buffalo River Short duration Inward Viewers expectations are on camping, trails, or cemetery Visual recovery will be fully achieved The proposed actions are following a course of action that will enhance and encourage regeneration
Visual Impact (VI)	
Silvicultural Methods Wildlife Habitat Management Road Management Recreation Management	Maintain current standards of silviculture for this area, which are minimal Several ponds and wildlife openings exist in this VSA Proposed Actions will improve traffic patterns throughout Project Area Proposed Actions will have low impact on Recreation during implementation within Robert's Gap Project area with no continuous future impact

Figure 57 - VSA (Visually Sensitive Area) I – Dixon Ford, Knucklehead, and Kapark

Scenic Integrity Objectives Analysis

Detailed, onsite study requires the refining of the existing Scenic Integrity Objectives designations for this project. Considering the view sheds from existing and proposed VSA's suggests an increase in sensitivity in areas visible by more than one VSA and a decrease in sensitivity in areas where slope and aspect make the area less visible or invisible to passersby. This refining of the Scenic Integrity Objectives designations will enhance the recreational value of these drive paths while providing for the health of the forest.

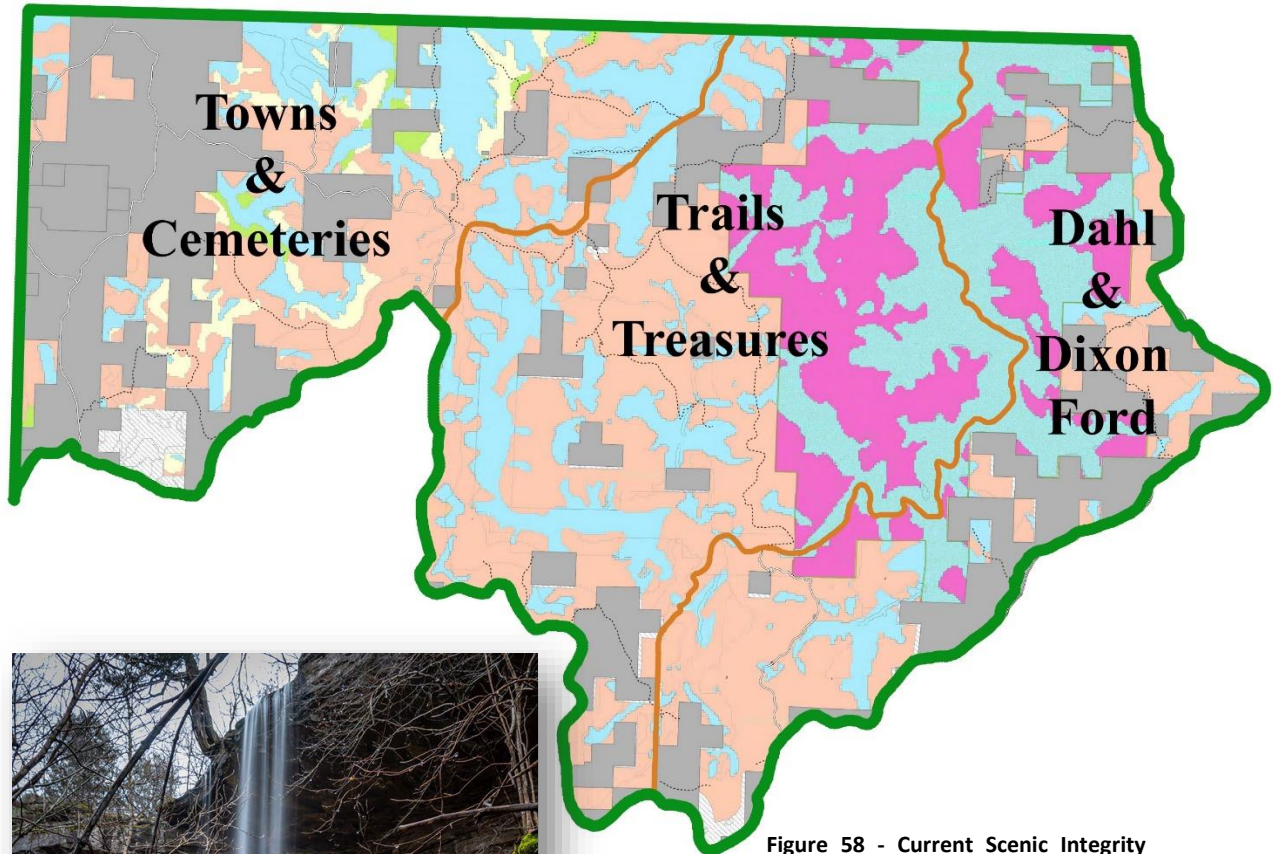
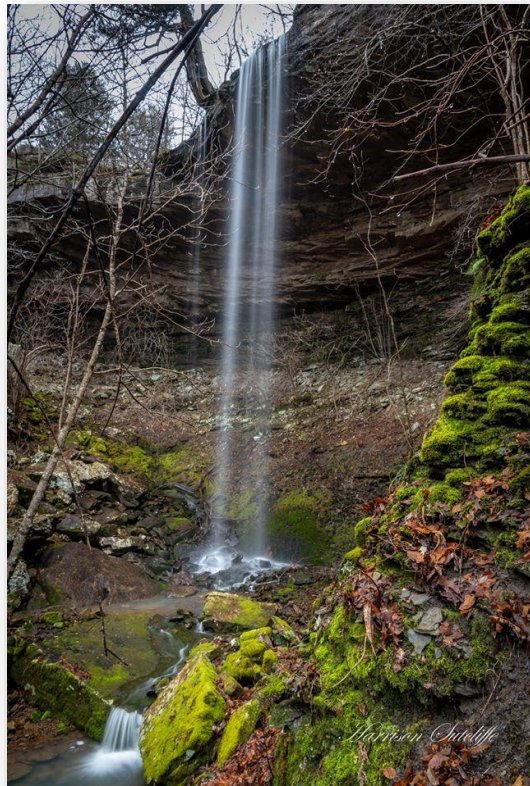


Figure 58 - Current Scenic Integrity Objectives Map with Zone References



Legend - Roberts Gap Proposed Action (PA)

- Private Land
- <all other values>

Scenic Integrity Objective

- High
- Low
- Moderate
- Unknown
- Very High
- Wilderness

RobertsGapProjectBoundary_07142016

Figure 59 - Beagle Point Falls - 76' - Wilderness off Kapark Trail, photo by Harrison Sutcliffe

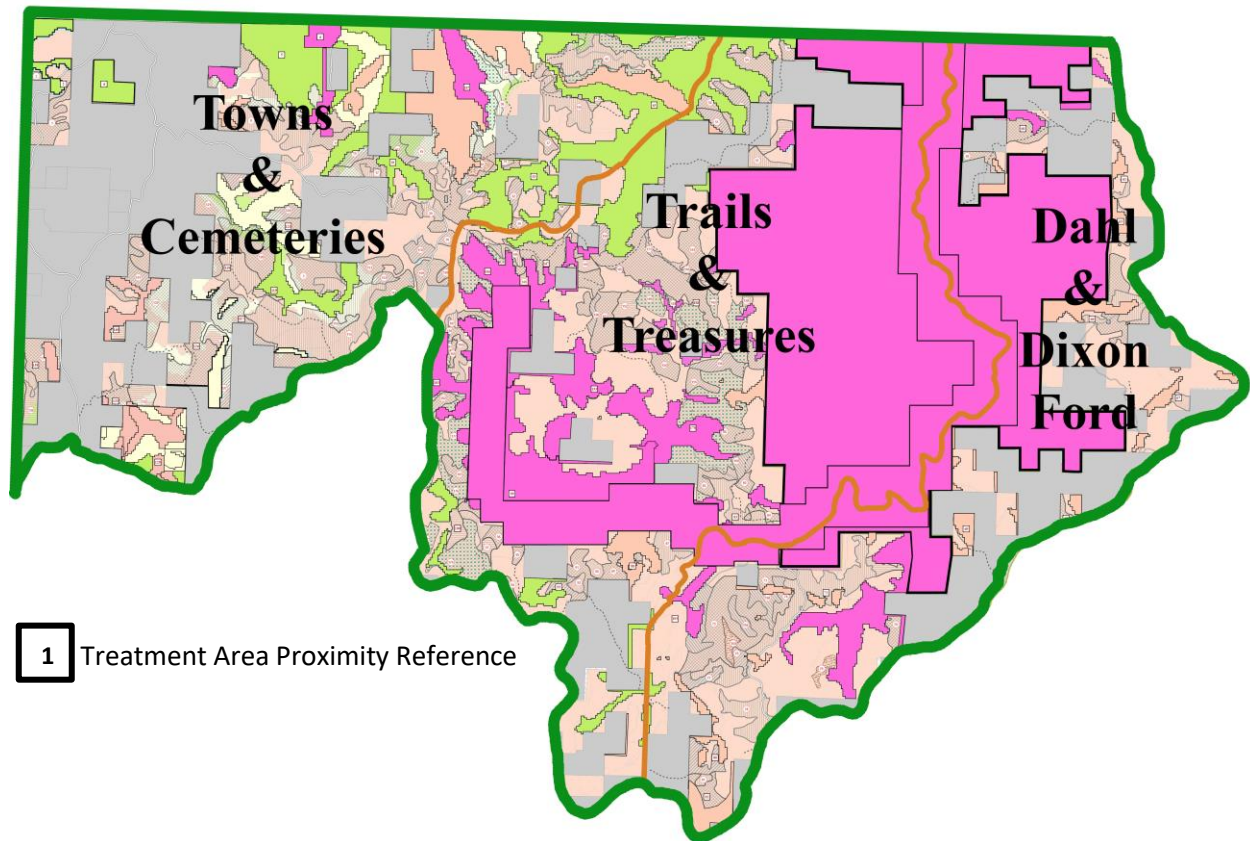


Figure 60 - Recommended Updates to the Scenic Integrity Objectives Map - Reference

Towns and Cemeteries

Proximity Reference for SIO's near TA 2 and 4

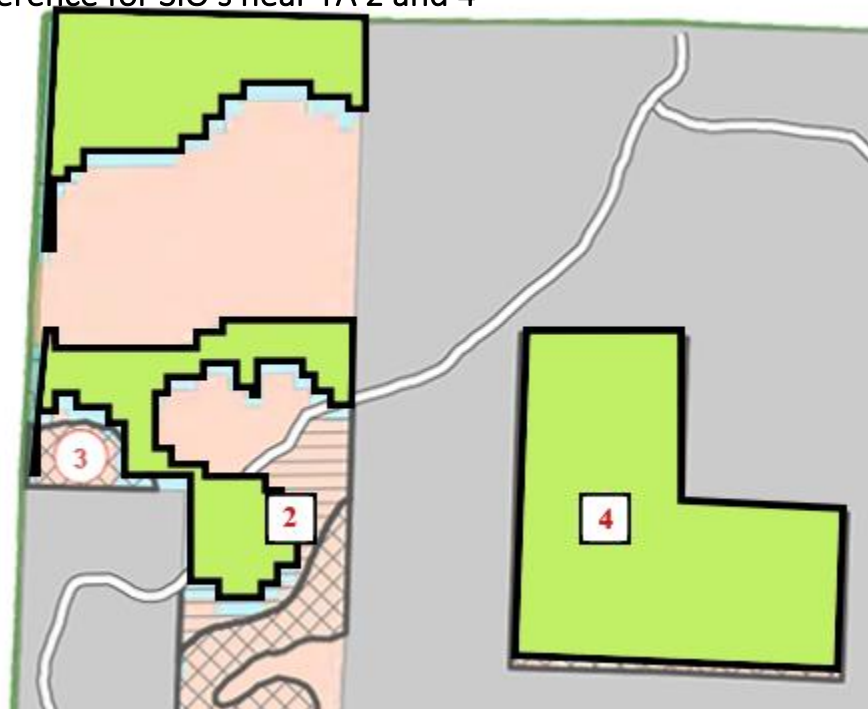


Figure 61 - TA 2 and 4

Proximity Reference for SIO's near TA 5, 6, and 16

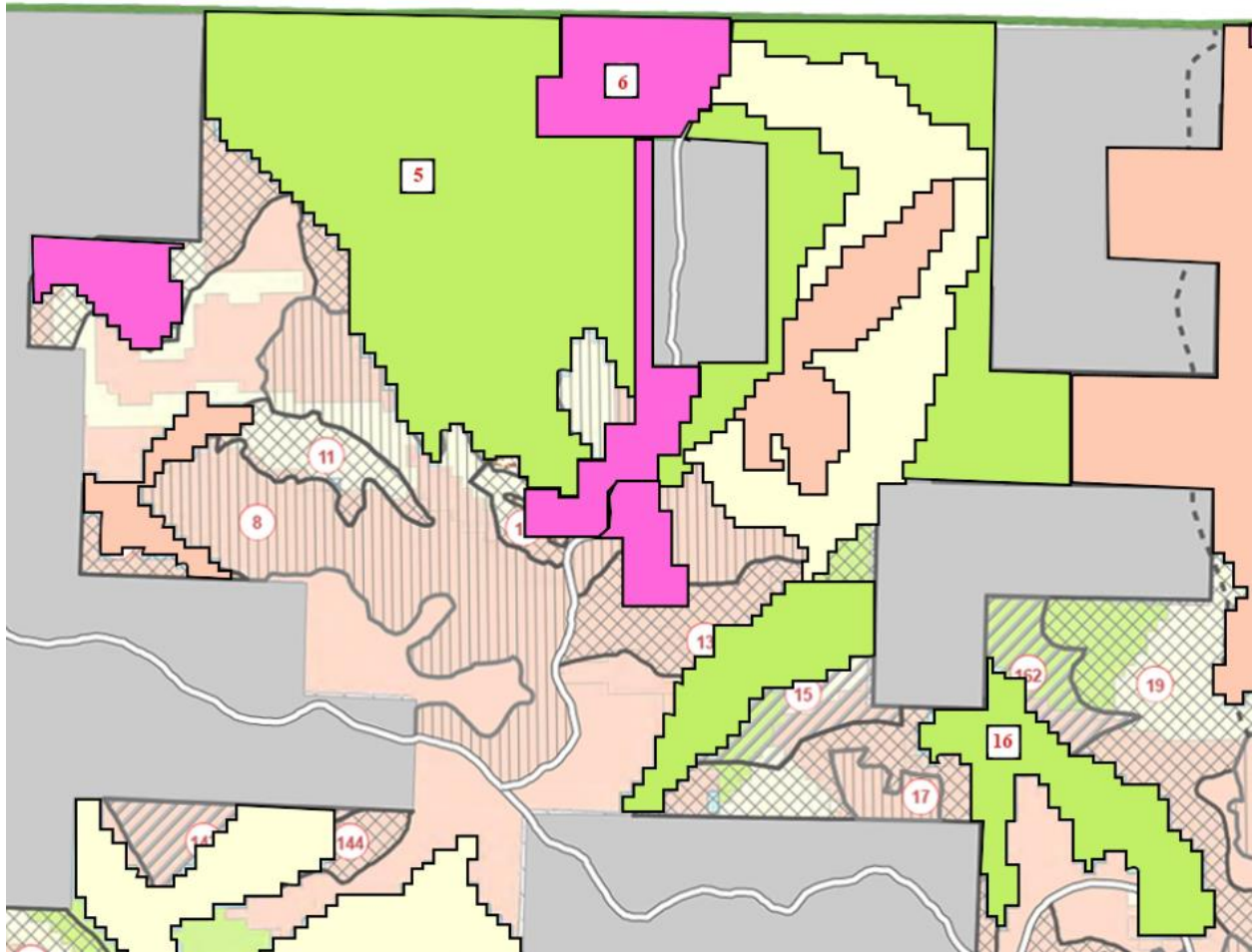


Figure 62 - TA 5, 6, and 16

Proximity Reference for SIO's near TA 33, 45, and 187

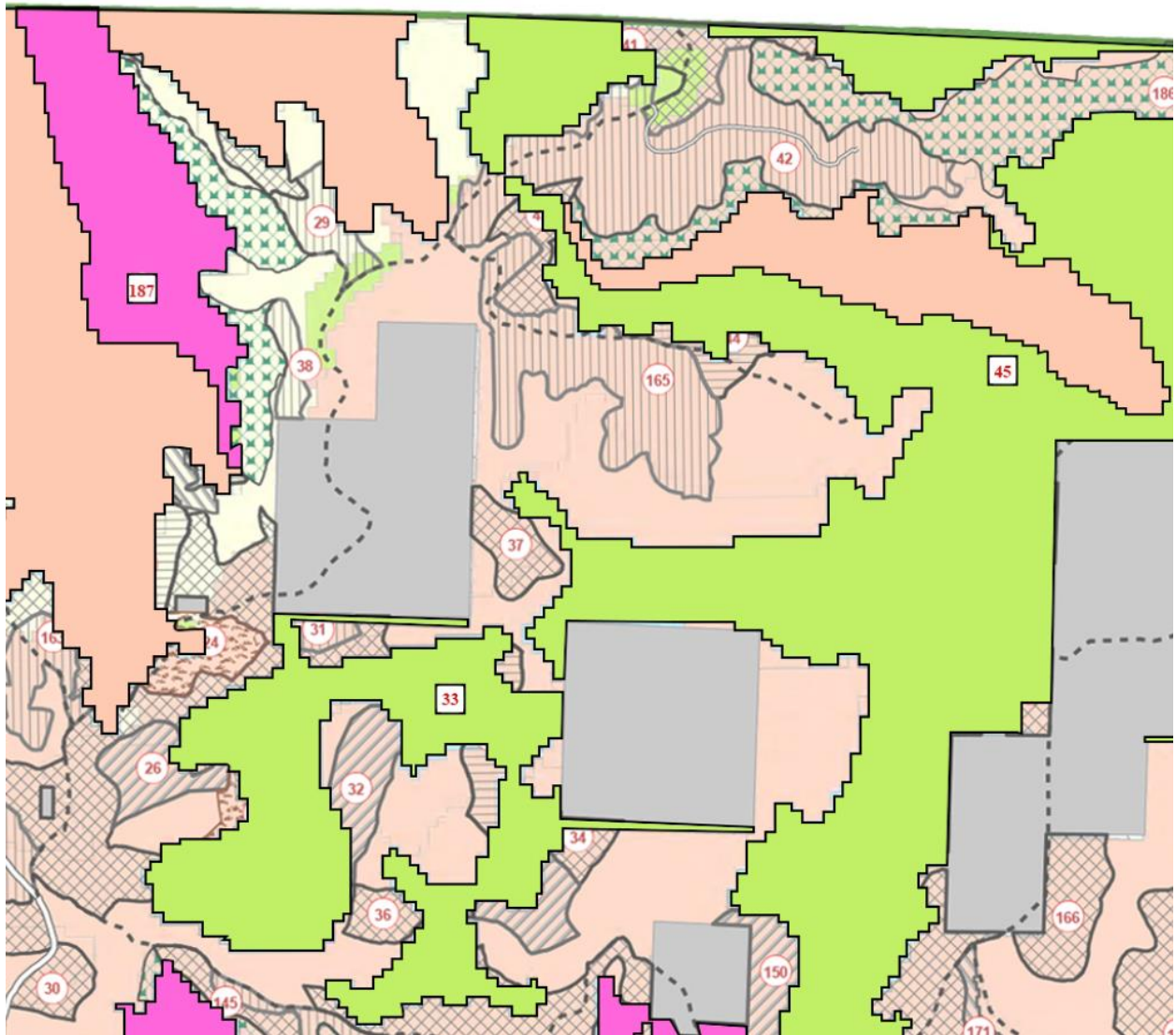


Figure 63 - TA 33, 45, and 187

Figure 64 - TA 117-119, 123, and 126

Proximity Reference for SIO's near TA 128, 133, 138, and 140

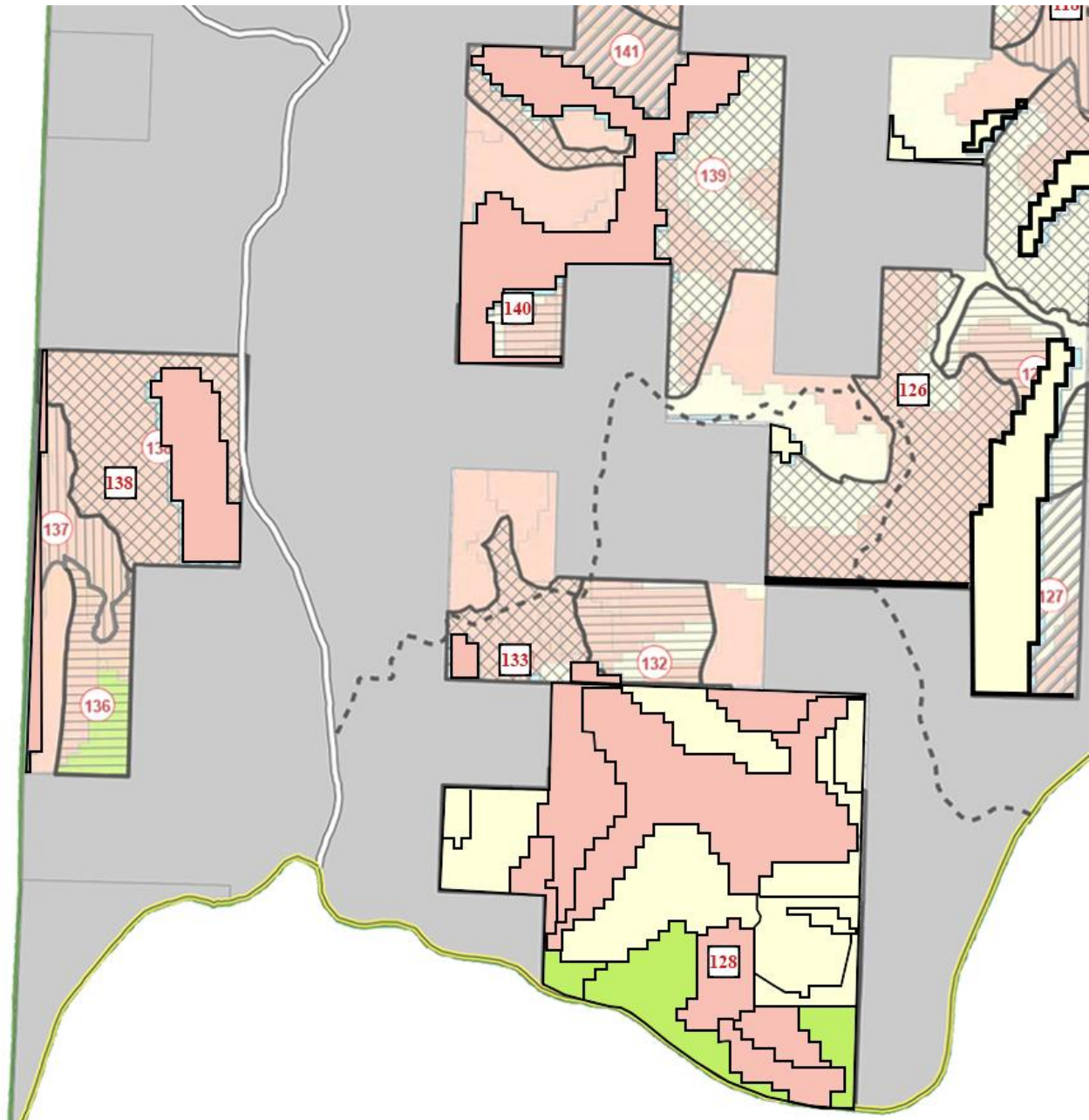


Figure 65 - TA 128, 133, 138, and 140

Trails and Treasures

Proximity Reference for SIO's near TA 93, 99, 100, 103, and 153

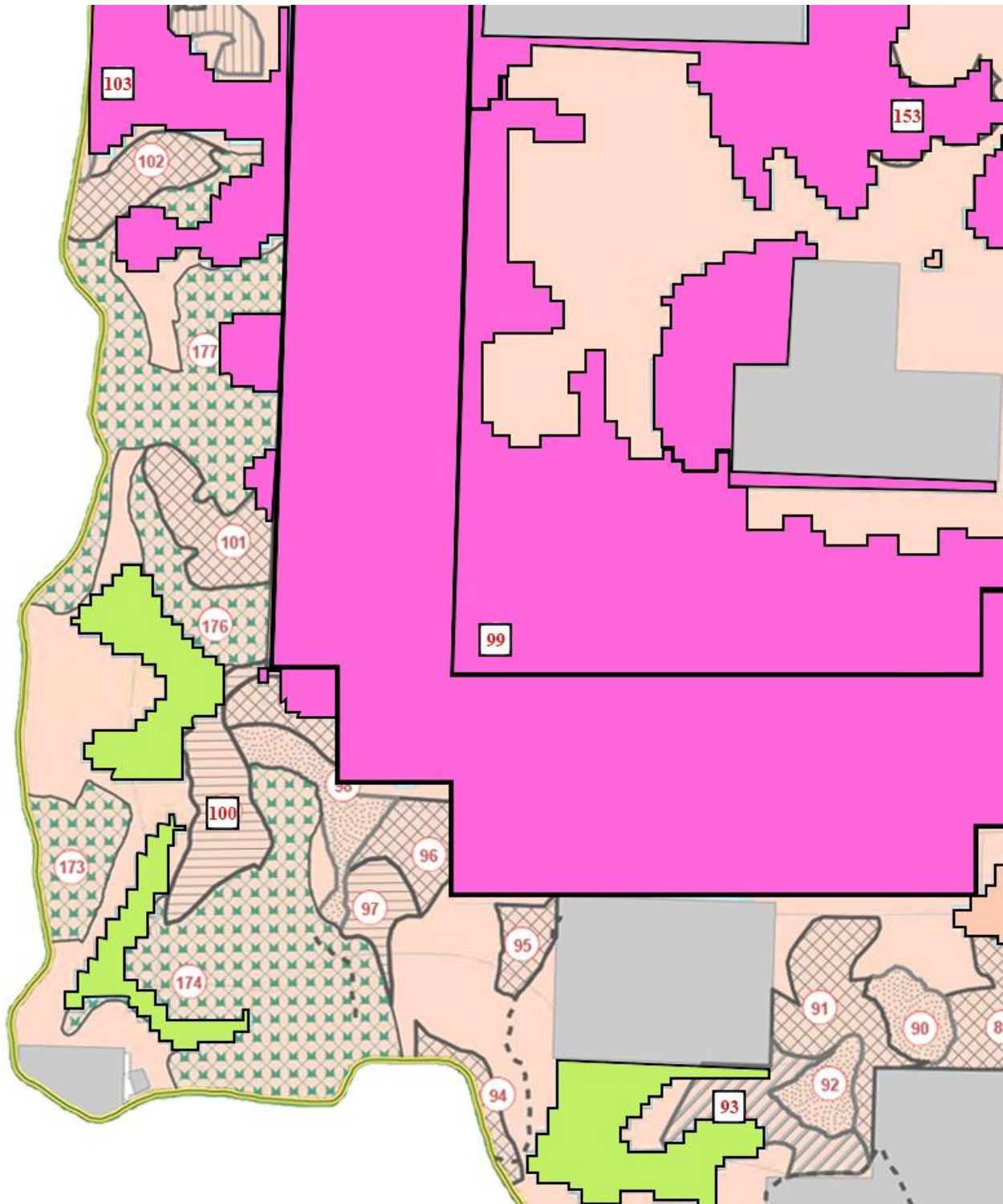


Figure 66 - TA 93, 99, 100, 103, and 153

Proximity Reference for SIO's near TA 103, 147, 153, and 184

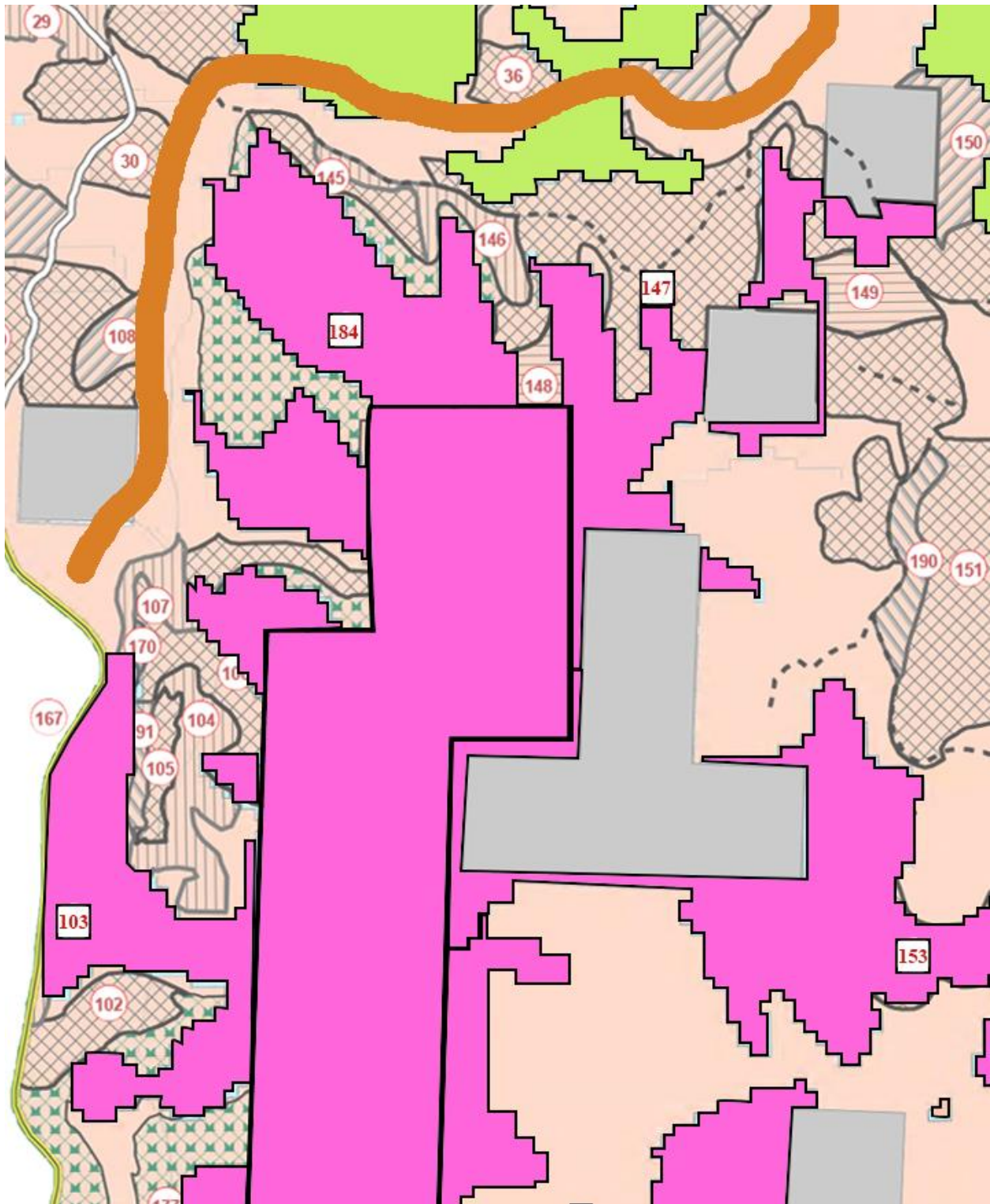


Figure 67 - TA 103, 147, 153, and 184

Proximity Reference for SIO's near TA 45

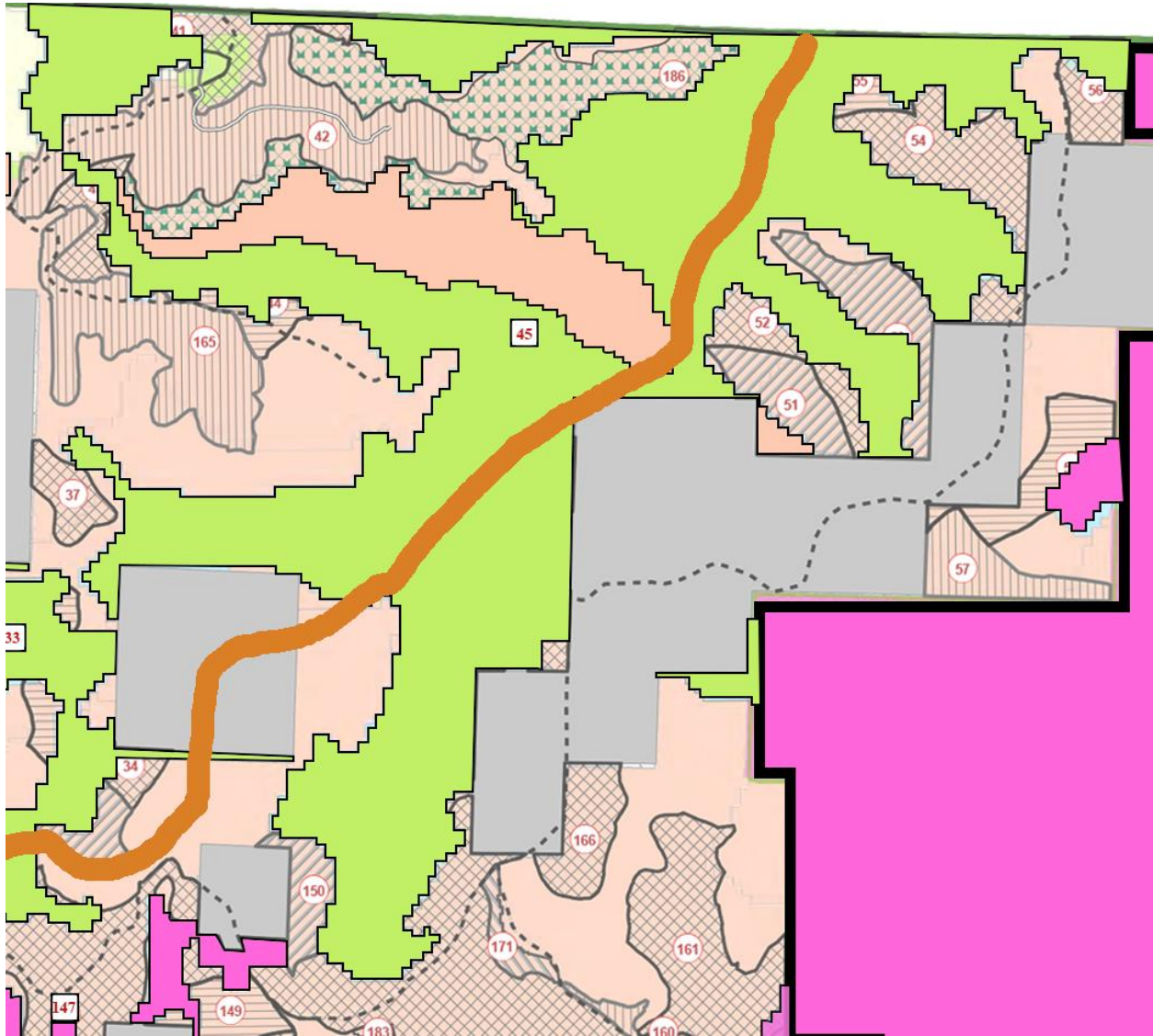


Figure 68 - SIO in Proximity to TA 45 as it flows into next area

Proximity Reference for SIO's near TA 147, 153, 178, and 188

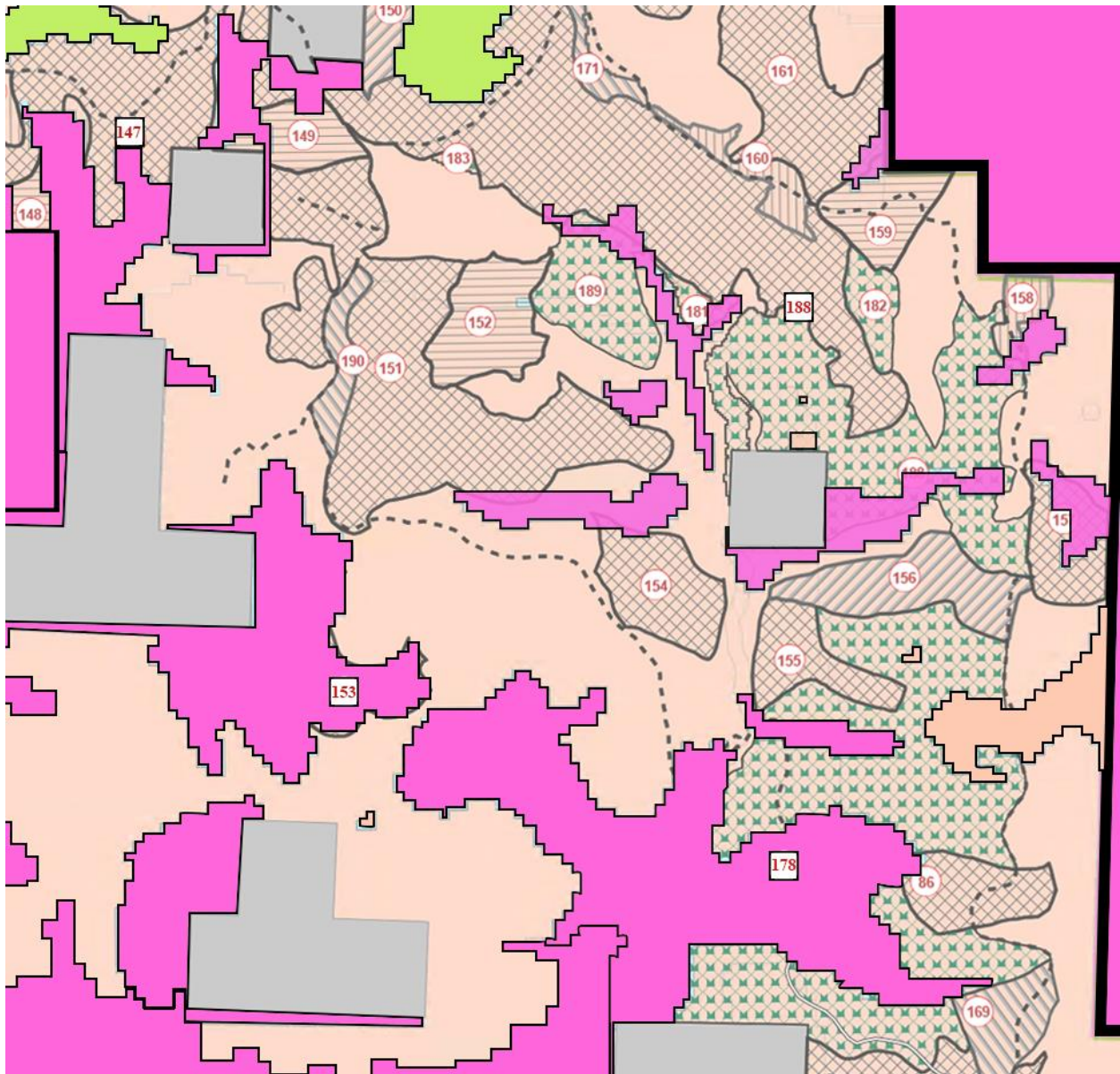


Figure 69 - TA 147, 153, 178, and 188

Dahl and Dixon Ford

Proximity Reference for SIO's near TA 72, 80, 82, 83, 88, and 193

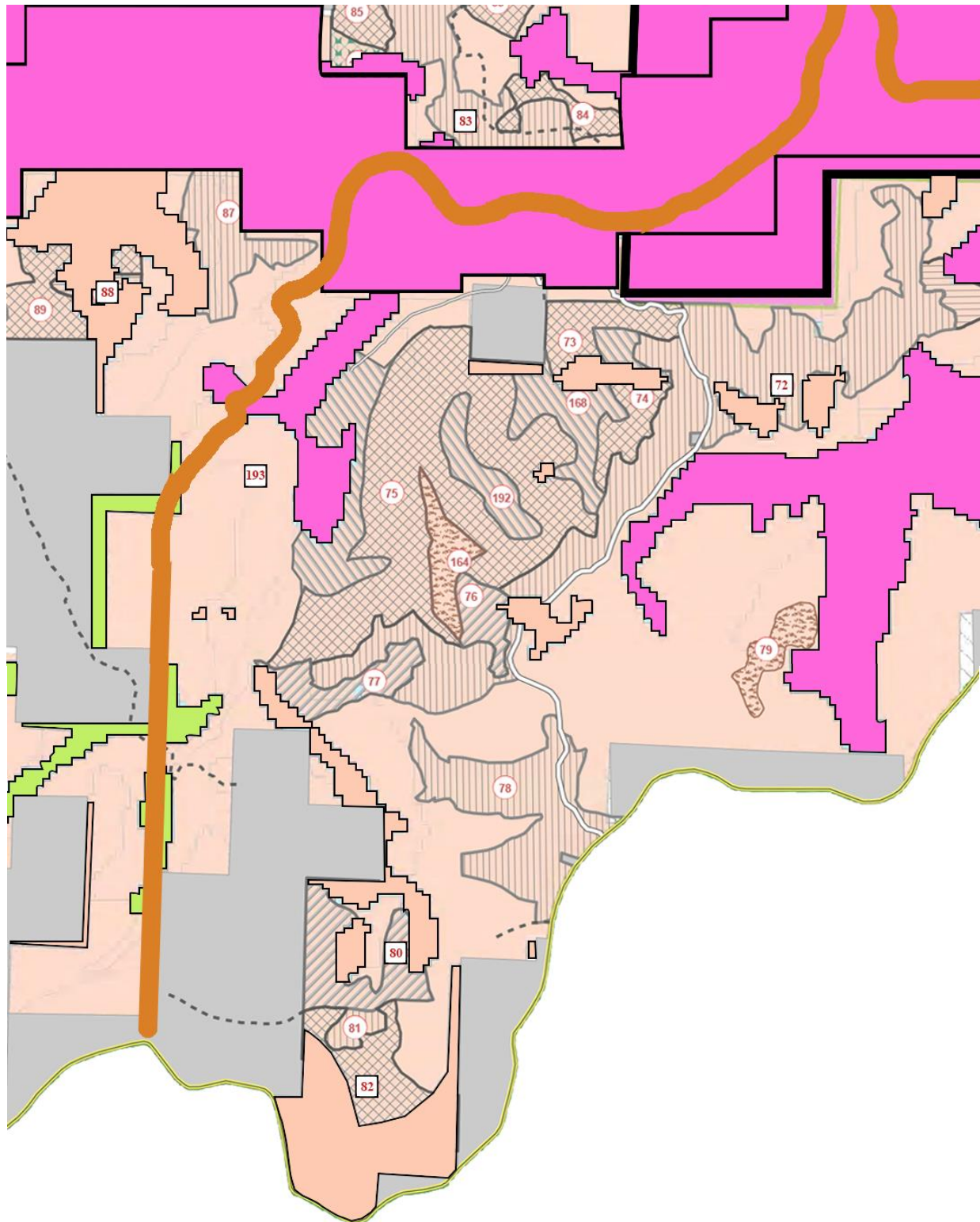


Figure 70 - TA 72, 80, 82, 83, 88, and 193

Proximity Reference for SIO's near TA 66, 67 and 68, 69,72

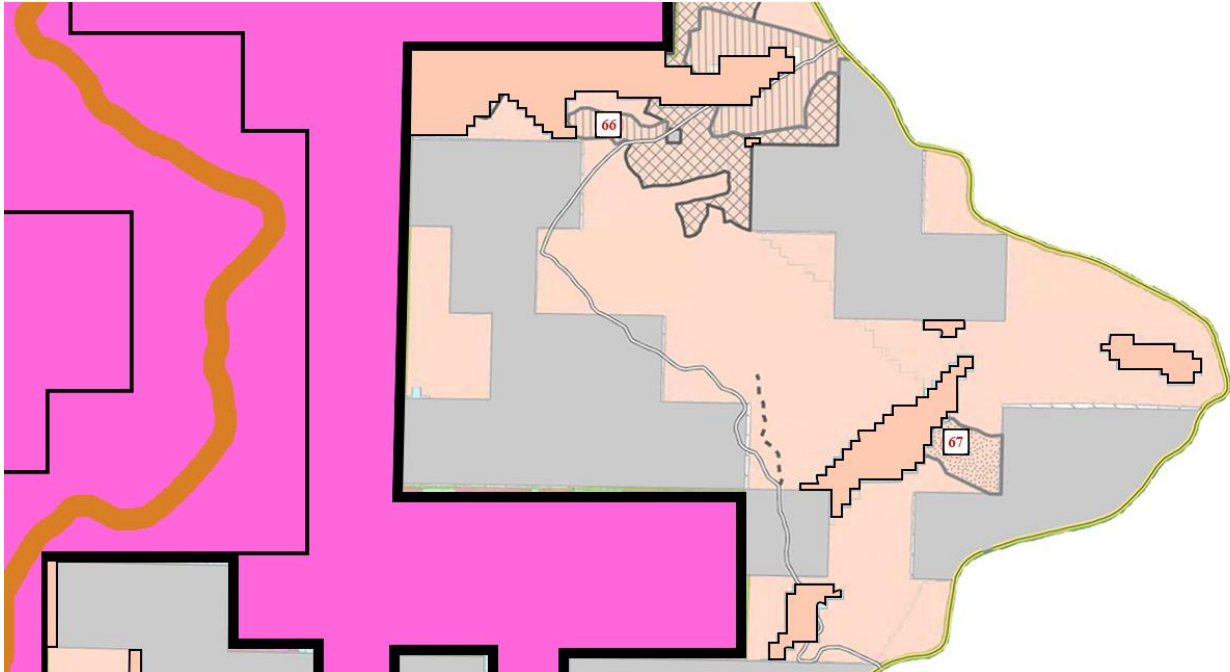


Figure 71 - TA 66 and 67

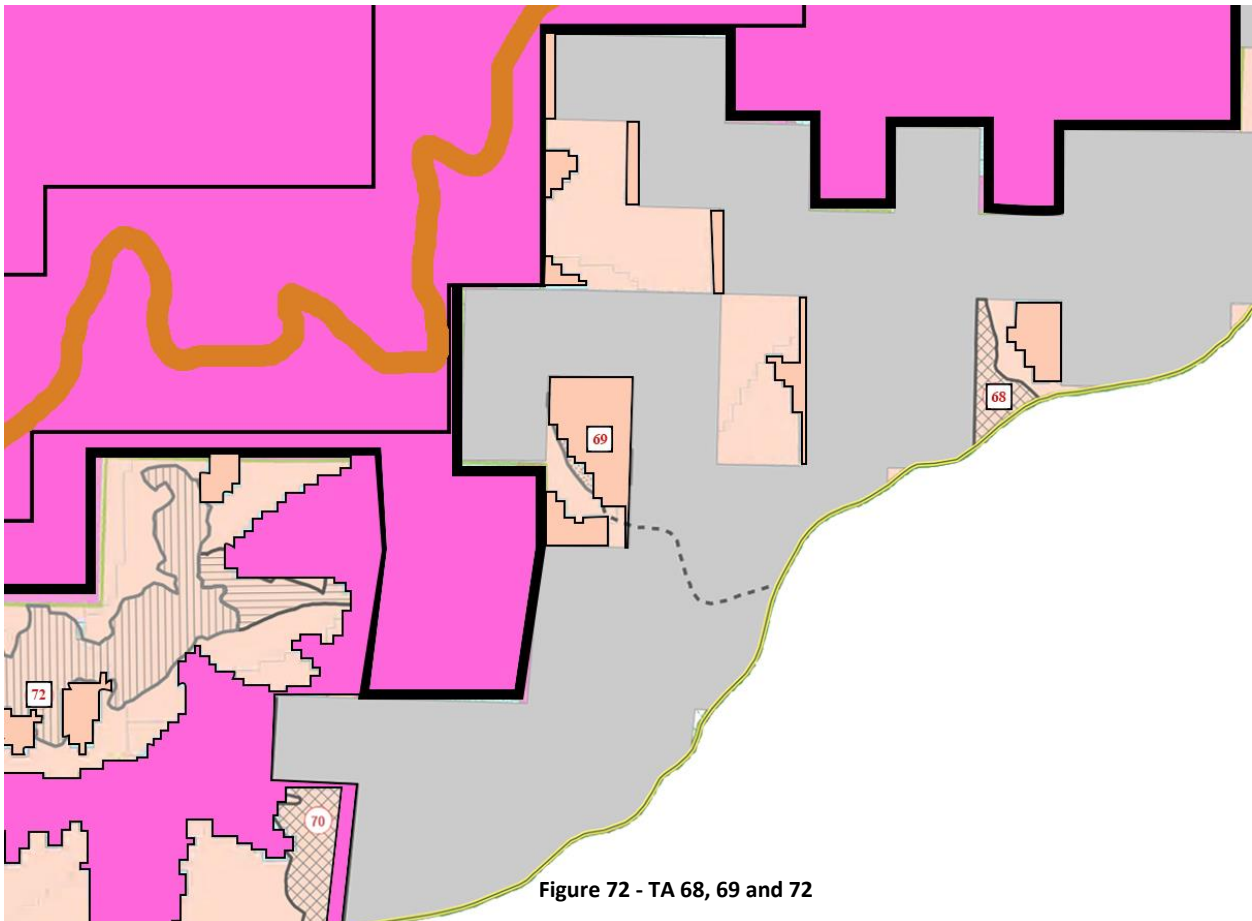


Figure 72 - TA 68, 69 and 72

Proximity Reference for SIO's near TA 60, 61, and 63

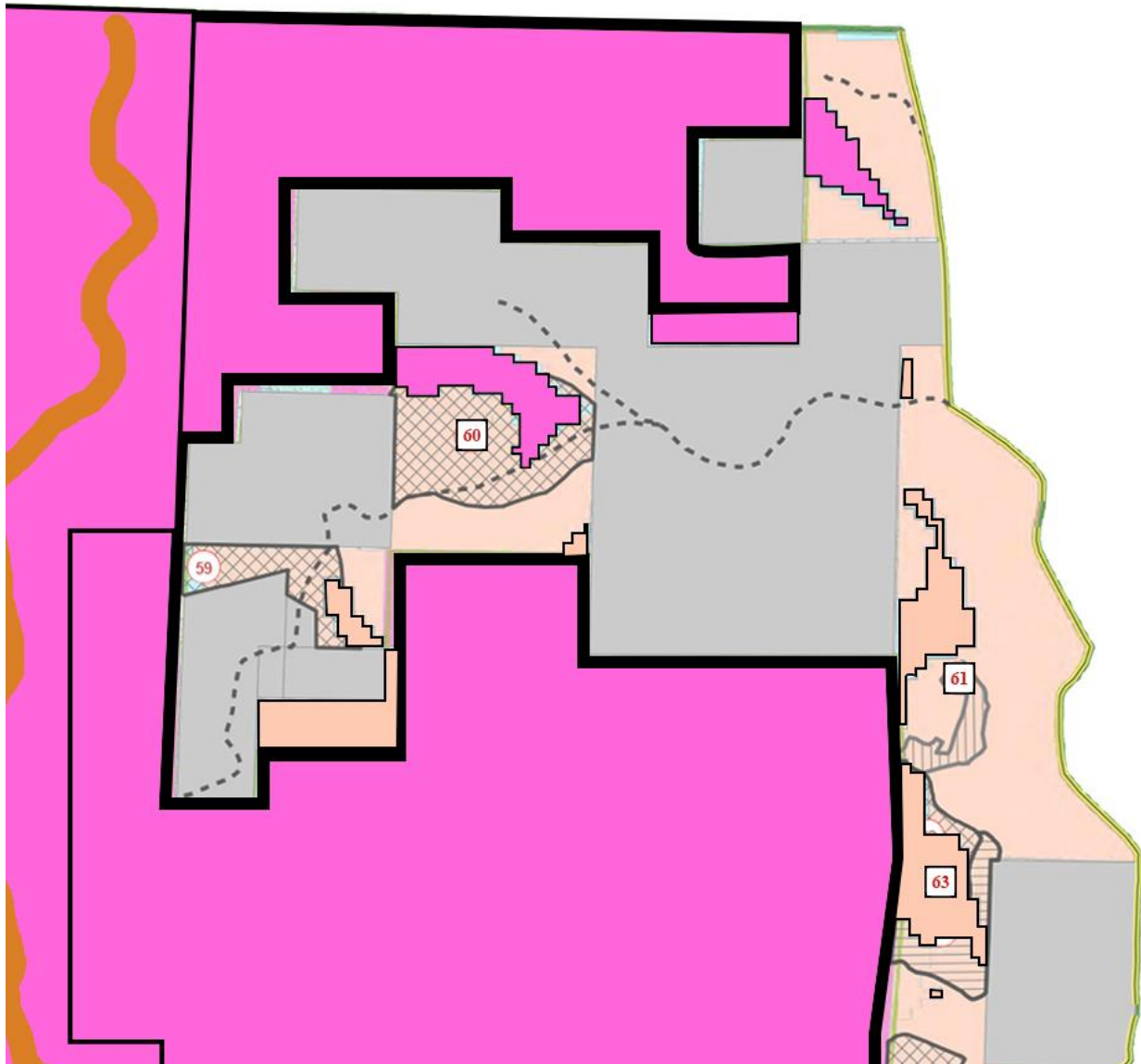


Figure 73 - TA 60, 61, and 63

Upper Buffalo Wilderness Area and Wild Scenic River Areas

These areas have Very High Scenic Integrity Objectives that feather out into the rest of the forest and especially into the Upper Buffalo Mountain Bike Trail system.

Mitigation Summary

VSA A	Small Towns
PTA (Proposed Treatment Area)	No Mitigation Needed
VSA B	Kings River
PTA (Proposed Treatment Area)	No Mitigation Needed
VSA C	Cemeteries
PTA (Proposed Treatment Area)	No Mitigation Needed
VSA D	Reeves Mountain
PTA (Proposed Treatment Area)	No Mitigation Needed
VSA E	Cave Mnt. Trailhead, Buffalo Creek and Fire Tower
PTA (Proposed Treatment Area)	No Mitigation Needed
VSA F	Whitaker Point (Hawksbill Crag), Cave Mountain Church, and Robert's Gap
PTA (Proposed Treatment Area)	Mitigation Needed
TA 54	It is recommended that parking for Whitaker Point (Hawksbill Crag) be moved off the roadside and into Treatment Area 54 to the west with the addition of a vault toilet. Pull the boundary of the Treatment Area even further west of the parking to allow a visual buffer between road and parking in order to preserve the view path along FR1271. In order to prevent distraction, clearly mark the new parking and provide a barrier at the sides of the road to prevent future parking on the sides of FR1271
VSA G	Mossville, Cassville and Curtis Church/Cemetery
PTA (Proposed Treatment Area)	No Mitigation Needed
VSA H	Dahl Memorial and The Tree
PTA (Proposed Treatment Area)	Mitigation Needed
TA 72	Care must be taken to route Pre-Haul Maintenance as far from The Tree as can be done Care must be taken near the Dahl memorial and The Tree, perhaps manual Pine Thinning within 30-50 foot of these areas in order to provide a buffer
VSA I	Dixon Ford
PTA (Proposed Treatment Area)	No Mitigation Needed

Figure 74 - Mitigation Summary

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